

## Chapter One Uncertain Future:

It had been a troubling night for Albus Dumbledore. In fact, one could make a case that the last decade had been troubling and if one would look back at the signs, they could determine that the Wizarding World had been in grave danger for the past twenty years. Sitting in the chair behind his desk, Dumbledore tapped his wand in an absent minded matter. Rumors had been getting back to him that Lily and James Potter had been murdered by Lord Voldemort. Betrayed by their Secret Keeper, Voldemort was lead to their hiding place and made quick work. More troubling were the rumors that something happened to Voldemort when he attempted to kill their one year old twins, Elizabeth and Harry. The two twins had been recovered from the house just some time ago and were currently getting the medical attention they required. It was a shame that two great people had been murdered by a dangerous dark wizard and even more of a shame that two children were orphaned at such of a young age.

“Enter,” stated Dumbledore in a forced tone of calmness and the office door opened, with Severus Snape walking in, looking flushed and rather ill. “Ah Severus, do come in and take a seat.”

Snape sat on the chair, looking very surly and winced in pain, a fact that was not lost on Dumbledore.

“Severus, what happened to you, you look to be in pain,” remarked Dumbledore.

“You would be in pain too if a great stabbing pain from your forearm was magically amplified throughout your entire body for several minutes,” remarked Snape in an agitated tone of voice. “A group of us had been awaiting the return of the Dark Lord, he had went to finish off the potential children for the Prophecy on this night, the two Potters and the Longbottom boy, but something must have happened. When I had woke up from passing out, my dark mark had nearly faded from sight.”

“Very interesting Severus, it does shed some light of the events of this evening,” commented Dumbledore and Severus just looked at

him with an inquiring look. "The Potter Residence had been the subject to an attack of Voldemort. Sadly Lily and James perished."

"Pettigrew betrayed their whereabouts to them, Headmaster," responded Snape and Dumbledore seemed rather confused at this piece of news.

"Pettigrew? As in Peter Pettigrew, how could have betrayed the whereabouts?" asked Dumbledore. "I have learned for a fact that Sirius Black was the one that the Potters had chosen for a Secret Keeper, and once the problem is sorted out, I will give this information to the Ministry."

"As much as I loathe standing up for Black, the Potters switched at the last minute, I just discovered that Pettigrew is the spy, overhearing him gloating about the Potters choosing him," replied Severus. "I would have told you sooner, but the Dark Lord was keeping a close eye on his followers on this day and I had only learned several hours ago."

"Severus, I find this information useful regardless of when it's given and it does make sense, Lily was insistent that she perform the Fidelius Charm herself, perhaps she feared leaks in the Order, an understandable, but unfortunate position to take," responded Dumbledore, waving off Snape's words. "We must locate Sirius Black regardless, as he would have known of the switch and knowing that he tends to react on impulse, he may go after Pettigrew."

"Of course Headmaster, I know better than anyone how Black doesn't think before acting," remarked Snape darkly but Dumbledore pretended he did not hear the remark of Snape. Quickly Dumbledore sent a message to the members of the Order of the Phoenix.

"This is Albus Dumbledore, Peter Pettigrew betrayed the Potters, yes, the rumors are true, if you see Sirius Black, get him to see me immediately, if you see Peter Pettigrew, quickly pass on the information of the location to me, but do not approach him, I repeat do not under any circumstances approach Pettigrew, he is on the run from both our side and the followers of Lord Voldemort, so he may be dangerous if cornered, all will further be explained in a meeting

tomorrow at midnight,” stated Dumbledore, before he sent off his message to each member of the Order. Several silvery shapes shot out in several directions.

“Headmaster, you spoke of a problem that you needed to resolve, might I inquire what that is?” asked Snape, his curiosity getting the better of him and Dumbledore paused, before deciding to tell Severus of the problem, he could use another perspective on this strange and quite frankly unprecedented situation.

“As I’ve told you, Lily and James were killed by Voldemort, but their two children managed to survive, despite serious injuries,” stated Dumbledore. “The best we can determine right now is there was a severe magical backlash in the home and Voldemort may have met his end.”

“May have Headmaster, might I remind you that my dark mark has faded, therefore it is a safe assumption that the Dark Lord has met his end somehow,” commented Snape but Dumbledore looked suddenly skeptical.

“No body, Severus, not even a fragment of a body, even a magical backlash would have left something if Voldemort had just died,” responded Dumbledore. “The Ministry is searching for any bodies found in the area, but so far nothing has turned up. It is highly probable that Voldemort’s soul was ripped from his body and his body was banished to some other plane of existence, as opposed to what normally occurs with the soul going beyond and the body staying, no doubt one of Voldemort’s experiments had caused some kind of mishap during the magical backlash.”

“Is this possible?” asked Snape in a skeptical tone of voice.

“Anything’s possible, Severus,” responded Dumbledore calmly. “But, as for ever happening in the past, I cannot say that I recall any cases similar to what occurred. The most important piece of the puzzle is which child Voldemort attacked that prompted the backlash. Once we determine that, we can determine which child was marked by the prophecy and take the necessary steps to protect the child until they are ready to complete their destiny.”

“Then you truthfully believe that the Dark Lord still exists in some form,” concluded Severus.

“I wish to believe that Voldemort is gone, but while there is no real evidence to indicate that he survived, there is also none to indicate that he met his end,” said Dumbledore in a resigned tone of voice as he rose from his chair. “Poppy is checking over both twins right now, her evaluation should be about concluded. Some further non-medical tests must be run to determine which child it is, before we determine what to do next.”

Snape nodded, as he followed Dumbledore through the exit of the office down the corridors of Hogwarts towards the Hospital Wing. It took several minutes for them to reach the wing. Thankfully, there were only a couple of other students in the hospital wing and they were currently asleep. The pandemonium that would take place if there had been one word that the child that would no doubt be painted as the savior of the Wizarding World was at Hogwarts would be difficult to contain.

“Ah, Albus,” stated Madam Pomfrey as she saw the Headmaster arrive. “I was just about to summon you myself to inform you of the results of the evaluation of my two newest patients.”

“And what would your prognosis be, Poppy?” asked Dumbledore but the Hogwarts Healer just frowned.

“It’s a bit more tame than I would have expected from a magical backlash of the magnitude you described to me, in fact, I would have said without seeing them that they are extremely lucky to be alive, much less in the mostly healthy condition they are currently in,” said Madam Pomfrey. “Other than the nasty gash on the head of Elizabeth Potter, it was just normal cuts and bruises. You would have thought they would have just fallen down the stairs, instead of having a house collapse on them after a backlash. Easily healed for the most part, except for the gash.”

“Why can't you heal the gash on Miss Potter's head?” asked Dumbledore, wanting to confirm a theory that had been forming in his mind.

“I've managed to clean it up and heal it the best I've can, but not completely, it will leave a scar for the rest of the girl's life,” stated Pomfrey with a resigned sign. “Dark magic is far from my specialty, but even I can detect some dark magic lingering around the area of the cut, that's preventing it from being properly healed.”

“Perhaps if Severus and I run some tests, we can verify more about this,” suggested Dumbledore.

“The two children are over there, currently sleeping, try not to wake them,” said Pomfrey, returning to her office to allow the two wizards to do their work and Dumbledore and Snape walked over, with two small children lying on beds, wrapped in blankets, with barrier charms around the beds to prevent them from falling to the floor.

“Let's start with the boy first,” prompted Snape and Dumbledore nodded, even though many signs pointed to the girl being the child of the prophecy, it was unwise to guess on such matters. It was possible that Elizabeth Potter was caught in the brunt of the explosion that may have been caused by young Harry Potter somehow repelling the curse back at Voldemort. Quickly, Severus removed his wand from the sleeve of his robe and waved it over Harry. The boy stirred in his sleep but did not wake. A barely visible black glow appeared over Harry for a split second. It was such that if one blinked they could miss it the glow. A couple more tests had produced the same quality.

“So minor, slight traces on Harry, nothing stronger than being in close proximity to a killing curse being fired off, it will fade in a couple of days” summarized Dumbledore and Snape nodded.

“We are in agreement with that fact Headmaster,” stated Snape as they turned to the Potter girl, the gash that Madam Pomfrey had indicated visible, only having just stopped bleeding “Now, stand back, I need to test the girl.”

Dumbledore gave Snape all the room he needed to commit the tests on the other twin. A dark shade of black began to glow around the young girl. A small gasp, as the magic seemed to be blacker as it got closer to the area where the cut was on her forehead. The only thing darker would have been the black hole. Snape stood their patiently, until the tell tale affects of the dark magic detection spell had faded.

"About what you expected, Headmaster?" asked Snape quietly but Dumbledore looked suddenly grave.

"It is much worse than I feared Severus, this high quantity of dark magic around that curse scar is rather disturbing," replied Dumbledore grimly. "Be that as it may, it does determine one theory that Elizabeth Potter is the one, the child of the prophecy. I must find it rather surprising, I had assumed that Voldemort would not even bother with her, the two other candidates seemed rather likely to be the one."

"It may have been just a matter of who was attacked first, Headmaster," supplied Snape. "Most likely, the Dark Lord decided to just eliminate the Potter girl, before moving onto her twin and then Longbottom. Perhaps he failed to acknowledge that she was a possibility to be a threat to his power."

"Excellent deduction Severus, it could have been just a matter of making a clean sweep of all the Potters, he just reached her first," praised Dumbledore. "Now, I wish to test both children in another few hours once more, before we make arrangements for them. We will have to send Elizabeth Potter to Lily's closest living relative, her sister Petunia. As her death came first and her daughter was attacked next, it would allow me to put blood wards around the house, but only if she is moved there within the next seventy two hours."

Snape just frowned, he had met Petunia Evans, later Dursley, more times than he cared to remember and gained the impression that she was not fit to care for an animal, much less a child.

"I'm certain that Petunia and her husband will put aside any differences they have to make sure their niece gets the proper care she requires," concluded Dumbledore to a very skeptical Snape.

"They do have a child around the twins' age after all, if I'm not mistaken and I will tell them everything they need to know in a letter."

"And what of the other twin?" asked Snape.

"Once we find Sirius Black, I'm sure he'll be happy to take his godson in," commented Dumbledore lightly and Snape just snorted, he felt Black was only just slightly more qualified to care for a child than Petunia Dursley. "I had entertained the possibility of putting both twins in the care of the Dursleys, but it may dilute the blood wards."

Snape nodded, he had read up about such magic very briefly and decided to take the opportunity to pick Dumbledore's brain while the Headmaster seemed to be in the mood to answer inquiries.

"Why not just give both of the children to Black or another family for that matter, and set up the blood wards there?" inquired Snape.

"Severus, while that may work in theory, I'm afraid it's not plausible for other reasons that I cannot explain to you now," remarked Dumbledore. "You must trust me that I have the best interests of both children in mind and the safety for the Wizarding World as well. Just trust me, Severus."

"You have me convinced, not that my opinion matters much regarding this particular situation," said Snape in an indifferent tone of voice. "I just hope that you managed to convince others whose opinions do matter to trust your judgment, for your sake at the very least."

"Yes, this storm will not be an easy one to weather, no matter what precautions are taken," said Dumbledore, more to himself than to Snape. "Many will not accept the fact that the one who had saved us from Voldemort, at least temporarily, is a witch, such is the unfortunate nature of this world."

Dumbledore stood there, leading Snape from the Hospital Wing. Elizabeth Potter had been marked by the prophecy, for better or for worse. While Dumbledore held no biases, he did admit that it would be much easier if Harry had been the one marked for many reasons. Still, it was a matter of chance that lead to the least likely of the three

probable candidates were marked and after one more test, Dumbledore knew the conclusion that he was likely to come to.

The next morning, Dumbledore sat in his office, about ready to leave to administer one more test on the two Potter twins, before sending them off. What worried him was that Sirius Black still had not been located and for that matter, neither had Peter Pettigrew. Both had fallen off the radar, so to speak. Dumbledore got to his feet, but a knock on his office door prevented his movement.

“Enter!” called Dumbledore and he saw Minerva McGonagall walk in, lead by one of the last people he expected to see, Andromeda Black, who had not been seen in public much after the messy death of her husband, muggleborn, Ted Tonks. From what he last heard, Andromeda and her young daughter Nymphadora went into hiding to escape the wrath of Voldemort’s followers or to be more specific, Andromeda’s sister Bellatrix, who wanted to kill Andromeda and her family for befouling their heritage. “Minerva, Andromeda, might I ask what brings you two to my office at this hour?”

“Dumbledore, I’m going to make this short, I’ve heard the rumors about Lily and James Potter and know that Sirius is supposed to take care of the twins should something happen to them,” stated Andromeda, awaiting for some kind of response.

“I will tell you right now that the rumors are true, they are dead and simply put, the Killing Curse sent towards Elizabeth Potter rebounded back at Voldemort, but whether he’s dead or not is something that we’ve yet to verify,” remarked Dumbledore and Andromeda nodded, with Minerva brushing tears from her eyes, as it began to set in that two of her favorite students were dead. “Both Elizabeth and Harry are currently resting in the hospital wing, I’m going to do one more test on them and send Elizabeth to live with her aunt, where I have set up protections. All I need to do is place her there to activate the charms. As for Harry, I was hoping to send him off to live with Sirius, but he’s currently missing.”

“That’s part of the reason why I have come here,” said Andromeda. “I received a letter today from Sirius, saying that he was going to go



and settle an old debt, and if anything happens, he told me to take care of Harry and Elizabeth.”

Dumbledore just looked like he had aged thirty years.

“Sirius has gone after Peter Pettigrew then, he betrayed the Potters to Voldemort,” muttered Dumbledore. “You have no idea how bad this is, if Peter is cornered, he will lash out against him and I fear for any innocent people who are in the way.”

“You mean you’ve heard nothing back from the Order yet?” asked Minerva in an alarmed tone of voice.

“Nothing on either Sirius or Peter,” confirmed Dumbledore. “One more test needs to be done but going off what we know right now, Elizabeth needs to be sent to her relatives where she can be safe and Harry...he needs to be moved as well, because if there are any Voldemort sympathizers that slipped underneath my notice here found out that either twin was here...”

Dumbledore trailed off and they did not need him to continue.

“Albus, they would be perfectly safe at my home, both of them, after what happened to Ted, I had the best protections money can buy placed around the house, it took the best Gringotts curse breakers days to break through them,” said Andromeda. “And I know for certain that nothing you could have done in such a short amount of time could have offered the protection that’s around my house and it took nearly a month to get ready.”

“Your offer is appreciated, but the circumstances are too far complicated for me to even begin to explain, Elizabeth would be much safer at the house of her aunt,” said Dumbledore and Andromeda looked at the Headmaster with a skeptical look and Minerva stood there as well, slightly disapproving. “I can’t give you my reasoning right now, but she’ll be protected from harm but your offer to take Harry can be accepted, until the moment Sirius is found.”

“Albus, I must cut in, I’ve sure you know the potential ramifications of separating magical twins from each other at such a young age,” said Minerva sternly.

“I have considered this but sending Harry to Petunia and her husband will dilute any protections around the house, causing them to be broken with a little bit of effort,” replied Dumbledore. “I am certain that there will be no lasting harm done, it’s not been magically proven, just quite a lot of theory generated by circumstantial evidence.”

“Petunia, Dumbledore, you can’t think of sending Lily’s daughter to her,” said Andromeda, who had left Hogwarts just when Lily, James, and Sirius were in their second year and had glimpsed Petunia, gaining a bad first impression. Also, Sirius had written to several times through the years and the depiction of Petunia through her cousin’s words had not been all that flattering. “I don’t know her as well as some do, but she hates magic, out of jealousy...”

“Andromeda, I will explain to Petunia that she must care for her niece like she was her own daughter, but I doubt we don’t have much to worry about,” said Dumbledore waving off Andromeda’s protests. “I doubt that Petunia, no matter how much she dislikes magic, would have the malice take it out on an innocent child.”

The look on Dumbledore’s face indicated that his mind has been made up about this matter and no evidence supporting Petunia’s hatred for magic would persuade him from his stance.

Dumbledore sat, what he concluded from those tests, how long the dark aura lingered, it was for the best that the girl was sent to the Dursleys. At least her magic would develop at a much slower and manageable rate that it would be had she knew exactly what she was, perhaps allowing Dumbledore to counterattack the after affects of the Killing Curse.

“She will be safe, you will make sure that no one will harm her,” said Andromeda, who was rather skeptical at the mere thought of sending a young, defenseless magical child was being sent to magical hating Muggles, most likely being forced on them as well. “Promise me and Sirius as well when we find him.”

"You have my word Andromeda that as long as Elizabeth Potter continues to consider her aunt's residence home, that no one who means her harm will be able to touch her," responded Dumbledore. "If I'm wrong, if I've made a mistake, then I will not fight you if you try and remove her from that place should any harm befall her. It will never come to that, but if it does, you know my stance on the matter."

Andromeda nodded, but it was a reluctant nod and Minerva also seemed to have similar reservations. She also had heard of Lily's sister's hatred for magic and had no doubt that her husband would be no different. Having spoken on the matter, Dumbledore rose to excuse himself from his office to perform the final test, on the minimal chance that he had been mistaken.

Sirius Black walked down the streets of London, keeping alert at any signs for the traitorous rat, his wand drawn. All thoughts were that he would kill him for betraying Lily and James. A small rational part of Sirius's mind that had not been unhinged by the betrayal had wondered what went wrong that caused Peter to turn to Voldemort. All throughout Hogwarts, Peter was a bit timid, but he stuck by his friends through and through. Then once they left, something happened to change Peter. Sirius had been focused on fighting Voldemort to pay too much attention to Peter, he wished he did, if he had, he might have seen some signs that would have made him think twice about convincing Lily and James to switch the Secret Keeper at the last minute.

Sirius would have time for recollections later, as he saw a very familiar figure move through the London streets. He betrayed his identity when he caught sight of Sirius, before running as quickly as his legs could carry him. Sirius followed, wand drawn, it was a small favor that Peter was never good at Apparation, but he feared that Peter would change into his Animagus form.

"PETER!" bellowed Sirius, he cornered Peter at the end of the alleyway. On the other side, Sirius could hear people going on about their business like nothing had happened. Peter looked at Sirius, his eyes darting from side to side.

"S-s-s-irius, thank Merlin it's you, I've been running from the Dark Lord's followers, you've got to help me, they're going to kill me," whimpered Peter, but Sirius stayed alert, Peter was a bit more resourceful than most cared to give him credit for.

"Don't worry Peter, I'm not going to let anyone kill you," said Sirius in a calm voice as Peter relaxed suddenly, knowing he could slip out. "BECAUSE THAT PLEASURE WILL BE MINE YOU MISERABLE TRAITOR!"

Sirius moved forward, wand on Peter, but Peter managed to somehow block Sirius's attack, before moving past him, to the entrance of the alley. Sirius walked forward, as Peter moved closer to the alleyway, before the traitor looked over his shoulder, giving Sirius an apologetic look.

"Sirius, how could you send Lily and James to their deaths, betray them to He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named?" demanded Peter in a completely staged horrified tone of voice, as he pointed his wand over his shoulder. Sirius threw a curse right towards Peter at the same time Peter pointed one towards a nearby gas pipe.

A loud explosion instantly killed everyone who happened to be in the blast, while injuring several others nearby.

Back at Hogwarts, Dumbledore had concluded the final test on the Potter twins. It gave him all the confirmation that he needed of the identity of the prophecy child. They sat up, watching Dumbledore curiously as they backed off. When they woke up, they began crying, wanting their parents. Dumbledore had to give them a watered down calming draught to help keep them silent, as the spells he had to perform required exact concentration.

"Elizabeth is the child of the prophecy, send word to the Ministry, that she's the one," said Dumbledore to Minerva, who nodded before going off.

"What of Harry?" asked Andromeda. "The Ministry is going to wonder why the two twins are being sent to two separate homes."

Before Dumbledore could answer how he is going to pull that off, Snape entered the Hospital Wing, with a copy of the latest edition of the Daily Prophet.

“Dumbledore, you really need to read,” said Snape, as he handed the paper to the Headmaster, who took it and began to read.

Sirius Black, Peter Pettigrew, and Muggles Killed In Magical Explosion in London:

The chaos surrounding the reported fall of He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named continued. With several Death Eaters captured last night (see page 7 for details), it appears that the individual who has betrayed the Potters has met a messy end. Sirius Black attempted to murder Peter Pettigrew today once he found out of Black’s betrayal of the Potters. Witnesses stated that Pettigrew had confronted Black about his betrayal and Black, like a concerned animal, lashed out and attacked him. The attack from Black was messy and caused a Muggle gas pipe to explode, causing an effect similar to a combustion curse. It killed Pettigrew and Black, along with twenty Muggles who were unfortunate enough to be nearby, along with several more.

In other news, the whereabouts of the two surviving Potter twins, Harry and Elizabeth are unknown. Rumors state they are at an undisclosed location receiving medical evaluation. This reporter hopes that the savior of the Wizarding World and his twin sister can pull through their condition, they are pillars of home that we need during this desperate time.

Dumbledore put down the paper, his expression darkening.

“Yes, Dumbledore, you were going to send a child to that impulsive dunderhead,” commented Snape lightly. “Now he got both himself and Pettigrew blown up, rather than caring what happened to his godchildren.”

“Severus,” warned Dumbledore, even though he could count on Severus to speak the truth, no matter how harsh it was, but now was not the time or place. “This does complicate matters and add to confusion, because as long as Harry Potter lives, it does not matter

how much evidence I give them, they will all assume that he's the one."

"Maybe it's for the best," said Snape.

"No, misdirection will only lead to trouble, the fact is that Harry Potter must disappear," said Dumbledore.

"Killing a child is something that I never thought you would advocate, Headmaster," stated Snape and Dumbledore looked incredulous that Snape even suggested that he would think of such a thing such a thing.

"No you misunderstand me, but the world can think that Harry could not overcome his injuries, he was weaker than his sister," said Dumbledore gravely, not wanting to take this resort, but as long as the world thought both twins survived, Harry would always be considered to be the one and thus put in danger, with no blood protections to shield him. "That he died due to complications, but his sister managed to survive, Elizabeth Potter is the Girl-Who-Lived, surviving while the rest of her family perished."

Snape remained silent, despite his misgivings that the Headmaster was playing a very dangerous game, he had no desire to argue with the Headmaster over matters regarding the spawn of James Potter, even if they also were technically Lily's children. He would deal with them all too soon once they attended Hogwarts.

"I just hope that I can convince Andromeda to perform the blood adoption ritual, that will give us the extra insurance that Harry Potter can disappear from view, without any questions," said Dumbledore. "It is borderline dark magic, but there is no other choice that can work as well to trick Ministry sensors."

Snape remained silent. Dumbledore was playing with fire. Snape did pride himself knowing a great deal about both dark magic and magic that was questionable but not illegal. And what he knew was no matter how many blood adoption rituals the boy went to, he would always be who he was born as to a certain extent, especially with a strong tie like a twin. It was much like being disowned, no matter how

many family tapestries a person were blasted off of, it did not change who a witch or a wizard was born at.

“Time is short, I must take Miss Potter to her new home to secure the blood protections before time runs short,” said Dumbledore, as he scooped up the toddler wrapped in the blanket, who began to kick up quite a fuss having been separated from her twin.

“Hawwry!” cried Elizabeth, as she looked down at her twin, reaching for him, attempting to squirm from Dumbledore’s arms, beating her little fists on Dumbledore’s chest in a desperate, but futile attempt to get free.

“Lizzie!” shouted the second twin and Dumbledore maneuvered his wand, placing a sleeping charm on her, with Harry turning to Dumbledore, with a hurt look on his one year old face as he watched Dumbledore walk off. “Stop that! Meanie! Lizzie!”

“I’m sorry Harry,” said Dumbledore in an apologetic tone of voice causing the second twin drifted back to sleep. He would awaken several hours later, when he would be sent to live with Andromeda and her daughter. He placed Elizabeth Potter in a small conjured basket and wrote a note. He walked off, the basket levitated by his side, to take the Girl-Who-Lived to her new home to solidify the blood wards. With any luck, he would not be seen by Petunia Dursley or her husband, as it would be harder for them to deny their niece living space if Dumbledore did not confront them in person.

Several hours later, Dumbledore was back in his office, with Harry on his lap. The boy had stopped screaming for his sister finally, at least for right now, but the toddler did not seem to be too fond of Dumbledore whatsoever. At least Elizabeth had been left at her relatives’ house without them seeing Dumbledore.

Andromeda joined them in the office sometime later, looking in a rather anxious mood and casting a dark look towards Dumbledore. She no doubt found out about the death of her cousin and Dumbledore was saddened to come to the conclusion that she blamed him to an extent for not finding Sirius in time.

“I’m here for Harry,” said Andromeda. “I don’t have much time to sit around and chat, I hate to leave my daughter alone with only our house elf, as capable as he may be.”

“I understand, Andromeda,” stated Dumbledore, as he handed Harry off to Andromeda, who seemed to be relieved to be away from the man who took his other half away. “There is only one thing I request for you to do. I will make arrangements for Harry to undergo the blood adoption ritual, so he will be a Black by blood.”

“You want to put a child of not even two years old through that ritual,” said Andromeda. “It’s highly recommended that it’s not used on a child less than five years old.”

“Yes, I know, but it has to be done, I will filter news that Harry Potter is dead,” said Dumbledore. “Naturally, there will be those in the Ministry that will think this is a ruse to hide the real savior and will find an excuse to track down Harry, to make his childhood miserable by hounding him with uncomfortable questions. Do you really wish to put an innocent child through such an ordeal?”

Andromeda sighed. Dumbledore would put her through a guilt trip.

“It can be done at Gringotts, as the goblins would keep the information a secret, no matter what,” added Dumbledore. “Much like the placement of young Elizabeth, it is something that I do not out of desire, but out of necessity.”

“Fine, but if anything goes wrong, I won’t hesitate to tell the Ministry what you did,” said Andromeda.

“And I wouldn’t begrudge you for doing so, now you should return home, the goblins will be sending word in a matter of days,” said Dumbledore as Andromeda walked off with Harry, who remained quiet all the way home. Dumbledore just sat behind his desk, hoping that everything would work out in the end.



## Chapter Two: Letters and Surprises:

Some time had passed since that fateful night where Lily and James Potter had been murdered by Lord Voldemort. Nearly ten years as a matter of fact. It was exactly a week before the birthday of the Potter twins, even though only one had an idea that they had a twin and around this time the letters would be sent off for Hogwarts, for the first time in ten years the Girl-Who-Lived would be returning to the Wizarding World. Some were anticipating her arrival but others yet were skeptical that a witch could live up to the lofty standards that they expected from someone who had beaten He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named.

Andromeda sighed as she walked down the hallway, after another futile attempt to have someone check up on Elizabeth, to see if she was as safe at the home of her guardians as Dumbledore claimed her to be. She hoped that Harry's twin was happy and healthy, but something had caused her to be extremely skeptical about her circumstances. So every year ever since Elizabeth had been sent off to live with those Muggles, Andromeda had sent a request to the Ministry, asking someone to check up on her. And those in charge had told her that they would look into the matter, but they were extremely busy. It was months before she heard back and it was the same thing every year. It was a bunch of politically constructed reasoning why they could not do this, but basically they had denied her request time and time again.

Andromeda had even written to Dumbledore, who obviously knew where Elizabeth was since he activated the protections around the Dursley residence, to check up on her. Dumbledore responded, reassuring Andromeda that the Potter girl was safe, but never offered concrete evidence that eased her mind. Ever since Andromeda had told Harry the truth about his past when he was eight years old, he insisted on wanting to meet his twin. She had to tell him about Dumbledore's roll in the girl's living arrangements and her uneasy about Petunia and her husband, to completely reassure her adopted son that it was unfortunately out of her hands, legally at least. At times, she thought about trying to get Elizabeth through less than legal means, but decided against it. She would do Harry and Nymphadora no good if she had been sent to Azkaban.

Right now, Nymphadora was still sleeping upstairs, tomorrow she would leave for her first year of Auror Training. Andromeda decided to let her sleep, she would have to learn the hard way that she could not stay up too late at night as Auror trainees had to get up at four o'clock in the morning and work until ten o'clock at night for the first year of training, with short fifteen minute breaks for meals. It was a grueling career, but it paid well enough and N.E. required for it allowed a person to transition into another career, should being an Auror not work out. As a mother, Andromeda worried about the dangers of being an Auror, but it was a consolation that there was not a Dark Lord currently plaguing Britain, so it was not like Nymphadora would have to fight anything too dangerous for the foreseeable future.

As for Harry, he was currently outside in the backyard, with his two best friends, Draco Malfoy and Ginny Weasley. His other friend, Luna Lovegood, was currently on holiday with her father. Over the years, Andromeda had mended the fences with her sister Narcissa, despite Andromeda's distrust of Narcissa's husband Lucius. Andromeda had only saw Lucius twice, as he was away with either his work on the Hogwarts Board of Governors or his advisory role, so it was not much of a strain on her recently repaired relationship with her sister. Draco and Harry had fallen into a friendship, after some initial distrust on both sides, as it seemed that Draco had no friends, unless one counted on the children of his father's old friends, and Harry always seemed a bit reserved on who he trusted. Still both sisters agreed that Harry would be a good influence on Draco, as he had often had a bit of an arrogant attitude thanks to Lucius's lofty expectations at what he wanted his son to achieve.

As for Ginny, well, Andromeda had introduced Harry to the Weasleys, thinking that he might hit it off with the youngest boy, Ron, as they were the same age. Perhaps it was the fact that Ron was an obsessed fan of the Chudley Cannons, a team Harry thought of as an absolute joke. Or perhaps it was the fact that Ron was obsessed with Elizabeth Potter or to be more accurate, the Girl-Who-Lived, despite never meeting her in his life. Of course, the fact that Harry squashed Ron in a game of chess the one time they played, causing Ron to throw a fit at being beaten in a game that he never lost. Most likely, it was a combination of all three factors that caused them to not hit it off.

However, Harry had formed a friendship with Ginny, who had sympathized with Harry's irritation of Ron's immaturity. Plus they liked reading about magic and enjoyed flying, but were not obsessed with Quidditch like Ron was, so they had a bit in common.

It took a while for Draco and Ginny to become comfortable around each other, as Draco had been told by his father whenever he was around about all the families that were blood traitors and the Weasleys were at the top of the list. Ginny had also overheard some things that were not exactly too complimentary to the Malfoys either. Still, Harry was patient in helping the two work out whatever distrust they had for each other, after all, he did want his two friends to get along and thankfully within time they did. Luna had already been friends with Ginny, due to them being the only two girls in walking distance of each other and had meshed well enough with their group and also offered Luna friends to get through a tough time, the accidental death of her mother.

Right now, Harry, Draco, and Ginny sat in chairs in the background, as Draco and Harry were a little month away from attending their first year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Even though Ginny had a year to go before she got to go, she still enjoyed talking about what classes she looked forward to, based on what she had learned from the experiences of her five oldest brothers at Hogwarts.

"Okay, we're pretty much in agreement that Potions and Defense are the most useful classes, at least in the first year, with Runes and Arithmancy being up when we get to choose new one's in third year, and History of Magic is the Wizarding World's attempt to cure insomnia," concluded Ginny. "So what house do you think you'll be in?"

"Slytherin obviously, every Malfoy for the past nine generations has been in that house and most of them before that," said Draco without really thinking, causing Harry and Ginny to both sigh in exasperation.

"Yes, that's nice, but which house do you think you'll be in?" asked Ginny.

“Really, it is hard to imagine myself to be in any other house, but Ravenclaw might not be all that horrifying,” admitted Draco. “What about you Harry?”

“You know what I think of the Hogwarts house system,” said Harry lightly.

“That you think it helps encourage the stereotypes that are already too common in the Wizarding World,” replied Draco. “Yes, I think that you might have mentioned it once or twice or a dozen times.”

“Well, Harry does have a point, there are people who are cunning who aren’t in Slytherin, smart people not in Ravenclaw, brave people not in Gryffindor, and plenty of loyal people who aren’t in Hufflepuff,” said Ginny. “Some people who go into a house, because their family has been there for generations. Mum expects that we’ll all go in Gryffindor, so both her and Dad have basically encouraged us to want to be put there.”

“That’s just the thing, all houses have their positives and their negatives, truthfully one can’t be better than the other,” said Draco. “Father even said as much, even though he concluded that Slytherin’s drawbacks are less of a negative than the other three houses.”

“So, back on the subject, I think I can easily go into any of the four houses,” admitted Harry, even though he was really wanted to Gryffindor, because his birth parents had been there and had a feeling that his sister would be told that, so she would insist to be sorted there.

“You know, Father almost didn’t allow me to go to Hogwarts, he wanted to send me to Durmstrang,” said Draco casually, in the same air of one commenting on the weather. “It is a good school, but it does have an emphasis on dark magic and is far away. Mother didn’t like that too much and put her foot down, about which surprised Father and even impressed him because this is the first time she’s ever questioned a decision he’s ever made. So much that he conceded in letting me go into Hogwarts, despite his reservations about Dumbledore.”

Harry just nodded, he did sympathize with Lucius Malfoy's distrust for Dumbledore, even if they were for drastically different reasoning.

"But it should be an interesting year, because you know who else starts this year, it's in the Daily Prophet today," said Draco.

"Yes, Crabbe and Goyle, I know, the average IQ of the school is going to drop," replied Harry.

"Not them, they aren't noteworthy enough for the entire Wizarding World to anticipate her arrival, I'm talking about Elizabeth Potter, you know the Girl-Who-Lived," said Draco.

"Draco, don't tell me your crushing on her, I thought you had more sense than Ron," replied Ginny and Draco looked like Ginny had mortally offended him.

"No, I don't fantasize about people that I've never met in my life, but aren't you just a little bit curious about her coming to Hogwarts," said Draco and Ginny and Harry exchanged a brief look. If Draco knew what they knew, he would know that Harry was anticipating Elizabeth's arrival, but for drastically different reasons. "Father's even a bit intrigued, but there are those articles in the Daily Prophet, hinting that she might not be able to live up to her expectations and questioning the validity of her beating You-Know-Who. After all those years, there are some people that still think that her twin is the real savior and he's being hidden somewhere by Dumbledore."

"You know, she really shouldn't have to live up to any expectations, she's just a normal child like you or me," said Harry in an irritated voice, he had been separated from his twin for ten years but he was feeling a great deal of agitation for the Wizarding World thinking they were entitled to anything from a girl who might not even know there world existed.

"We know that, they don't," said Ginny shaking her head. "To them, she's just some symbol that they can sell newspapers with, not a real person with feelings."

"It wouldn't be this bad if she was a boy," said Draco as Ginny and Harry glared at him. "Hey, I'm not defending it, I'm just telling you what they're thinking."

"We need to make sure that she doesn't fall in anyone who is trying to befriend her for her fame," said Harry and Ginny nodded, with Draco just looking thoughtful.

"Just as well, Father wanted me to try and befriend her at any rate," muttered Draco, but something told him that the reasons that his father wanted him to get close to the Girl-Who-Lived were less than noble. He had tried to take Harry's suggesting that he should try and think for himself in mind, and there had been occasions recently where he questioned his father's motives but he still wanted to live up to his father's expectations.

"So, Luna will be coming back any day now?" asked Harry.

"Yes, within the next day or two, thankfully Mum didn't know that she and her father had left, I normally go to her house, and then we go here," said Ginny. "She isn't too comfortable with me being friends with Draco and she's only starting to warm up to you Harry. She was fine enough with you and Ron being friends, but she doesn't think it's proper for me to be friends with two boys. Every time she thinks I'm at Luna's but when we're really here."

"You were supposed to tell your mother that Luna and her father were going to leave, but it slipped your mind of course," said Harry and Ginny nodded with a mischievous smile on her face. "It's a good thing that she didn't check up on you."

"Hey, as long as I'm back before dinner, Mum doesn't worry all that much, I mean I'm her innocent little girl who can't do anything wrong," said Ginny. "If Fred and George went to a friends house, she would be checking on them every five minutes to make sure they weren't causing mischief all over the country."

Harry laughed and even Draco looked amused. They knew all too well that Ginny's twin brothers tended to have an obsession with causing mischief everywhere they went.

"Just a plus of perfecting the innocent younger sibling act I guess, I got away with stuff when I was younger that Dora would never have gotten away with," replied Harry.

"I'm really glad I'm an only child," muttered Draco by shaking his head. "If you two don't get put into Slytherin, there's obviously something wrong with the Sorting Hat."

"Ah yes, the hat, I didn't have the heart to tell Ron that all he has to do is put on a hat and not wrestle a troll like Fred and George have been telling him about," said Ginny. "Of course Mum and Dad refused to tell us how we were sorted, something about being tradition."

"One that few people follow anymore, I've know about it for years," said Harry.

"Same here," responded Draco but at that moment, the Malfoy family house elf, Dobby, appeared in front of Draco with a slight pop, bowing before all three of the children. "Yes, Dobby, what is it, can't you see I'm talking to my friends."

"Dobby begs young Master Draco's forgiveness, but Master Lucius has requested for Dobby to let his son know that he is to Floo home right now, so he can prepare for the birthday party that Master has prepared for Young Master," said Dobby before his eyes widened, when he realized that Harry and Ginny was there. "Oh, Dobby wasn't supposed to let these two know, Dobby is most sorry, please don't tell Master Lucius, bad Dobby, bad Dobby."

Dobby threw himself on the ground, banging his head onto the ground, chanting "bad Dobby, bad Dobby".

"Dobby, to your feet, you'll end up giving yourself brain damage," said Draco coolly and Dobby stopped, before he reluctantly got to his feet, casting Ginny and Harry fearful looks.

"Birthday party?" asked Ginny in confusion. "This is news to me."

"It's news to me to, I wasn't invited," stated Harry and Draco just sighed.

"I know you weren't, I asked Father, but he said that there were enough people coming already, the Manor would be too crowded," replied Draco. "Of course, technically it's not a party, that would imply that I would have fun. Father's invited a bunch of his old friends and their children over, many of them who are coming to Hogwarts too this year. It's not going to be pleasant, all of them arguing about whose bloodline is purer."

"No offense Draco, but when you put it that way, I don't want really come anyway," said Harry.

"Yes, it sounds dreadful," replied Ginny.

"It is dreadful," concluded Draco darkly as Dobby looked up. "Yes, Dobby, go home and tell Father that I will be along with the next five minutes."

"Dobby will do that Master Draco," responded the house elf as he bowed low, before he left with a pop.

"I better get going, good bye Ginny, Harry, I'll be seeing you soon I suspect," responded Draco, as he walked off, entering the house reluctantly to Floo back home, not even giving Ginny and Harry enough time to bid him good bye.

"I get the strangest feeling that Mr. Malfoy doesn't approve of either of us or Luna for that matter," remarked Harry.

"Brilliant deduction Harry, what exactly clued you in, the fact that all three of us are considered the children of blood traitors or the fact that every time Draco asks to invite us to Malfoy Manor, his father comes up with an excuse as to why we can't be there," said Ginny, shaking her head. "So, Harry, she is going to be coming, are you going to tell her?"



“Well let me just put it this way, Ginny, if some boy that you’ve never met came up to you and said he was your long lost twin brother, what would you think?” asked Harry.

“I would think he’s an absolute nutter,” admitted Ginny. “So you’ll work on slowly gaining her trust and then tell her eventually.”

“I will have to tell her eventually, Dumbledore’s advised against not tell her, but I’m not sure exactly how much I trust Dumbledore’s judgment,” said Harry. “Mum agrees with me, that the truth will come out sooner or later, but we’ve got to watch who we talk about it around. I mean, you only know because I accidentally slipped and told you.”

Ginny was one of the few people that knew that Harry Black was really Harry Potter, the supposed dead twin of Elizabeth Potter. The other individuals who knew of the secret as far as Harry knew was his mother, Nymphadora, Dumbledore, and Remus Lupin, an old friend of his parents.

“I know, I won’t tell anyone and I won’t tell Dumbledore that I know, we’ve been over this at lot,” responded Ginny with a sigh. “I just wish I could go to Hogwarts this year...”

“Yes, it’s a shame that they allow you in on your age, instead of maturity, otherwise you would get to go before young Ronald,” said Harry in a sympathetic voice.

“I’ll have to live with it, besides I can still go and visit Luna and both of you will write to me, to keep me updated on what I miss” said Ginny and Harry nodded.

“HARRY, YOUR SCHOOL LETTERS ARE HERE!” shouted Andromeda from inside the house and Harry sprung up to his feet, he had been expecting that this moment was coming soon. Ginny followed him.

“Exactly how many wrote to me?” asked Harry.

“Fifteen of them, Harry, there might be a few more coming, the Hogwarts letter is right here,” responded Andromeda, as Nymphadora had currently walked down the stairs. “Of course, that’s only if you want to go to Hogwarts, it isn’t a decision to be made likely, there are many other schools to choose from around the world, it’s not a decision to be made likely...”

“It’s got to be Hogwarts, of course,” said Harry, as all three of them knew the exact reason.

“Fifteen offers to attend magical schools, wow, Harry, that’s good,” remarked Nymphadora in awe. “I’ve only gotten about six or seven if I remember rightly.”

“Eight,” said Andromeda in an absent minded voice. “That’s about the average really, as other schools are really selective, more so than Hogwarts.”

“Makes sense, they accept anyone who shows a moderate ability of magical talent,” remarked Harry as he opened his letter, reading it, before he prepared to right back, accepting his place as a student at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. If he received his letter, Harry suspected that his sister would be getting her letter soon enough.

“Yes, tomorrow morning, we’ll go to Diagon Alley and get everything,” replied Andromeda.

Ten year old Elizabeth Potter’s eyes snapped open as she heard a rapping on the outside of her cupboard door. Reaching forward, she put on her taped up glasses, feeling the swelling underneath her right eye, a souvenir from her last run in with Dudley and his gang.

“Up, it’s time for you to get up!” screeched Aunt Petunia.

“Keep your hair on woman, I’m up,” said Elizabeth, as she moved over, even though she was much smaller than other girls her age, this cupboard was still cramped. The fact she was claustrophobic did not help matters either, but she wished she had not mentioned her fears to the Dursleys. It did nothing to move her out of the cupboard.

“Don’t smart off to me, I want you out now, you lazy girl, you need to cook us breakfast!” yelled Petunia and Elizabeth moved quickly, as she exited the cupboard. “Quickly now, my precious Dudley is being denied his vital nourishment.”

Elizabeth bit her tongue, she had a feeling that her cousin could not eat for several days and still not go hungry. Still, she did not mind cooking, considering the alternative would be that Aunt Petunia would do so and everything Petunia cooked tasted like cardboard, something that Dudley had forced her to eat when she was five years old. She moved over the stove, busying herself with the bacon and eggs, knowing that despite her doing all the work, she would only get enough to survive.

For ten years, Elizabeth had lived at the house of her Aunt Petunia, Uncle Vernon, and her rotund, dimwitted cousin Dudley. For ten years, she was the victim of constant belittlement, about how she was useless and should be grateful that the Dursleys took her in, instead of her walking the streets. Not to mention the constant bullying from Dudley and his gang and the taunting of the other girls about her clothes, her hair, and her scar. Personally, Elizabeth thought the scar was kind of cool, her favorite part about her appearance other than her vivid green eyes, which Petunia seemed to hate for some reason. Her glasses, her clothes, and her hair, that she could not tame no matter what she tried, she could do without.

“Hurry up there, I’m starving,” whined Dudley.

“Highly unlikely,” muttered Elizabeth, as she continued to cook.

“Watch your tongue girl, you should take a cue from Dudley if you want to be an acceptable member of society,” lectured Vernon.

“Only if I want to be as big as a house,” whispered Elizabeth, careful not to let them hear her. The further she could get away from being like Dudley, the better. Dudley was a bullying git and got poor marks in school. Elizabeth had always gotten good grades and had got yelled at by her relations for upstaging their precious son. This only caused Elizabeth to strive to work even study even harder to get even

higher marks in school, because this was her chance to make Dudley look bad, as he was one of the key reasons why she had no friends. That and those clothes that Petunia bought for her, when she realized that it would be awkward to just give her Dudley's cast-offs. Calling them second hand would be given them too much credit, it would be more likely to call them fourth or fifth hand clothing.

"It's about time," said Vernon ungratefully, as Elizabeth walked the plates with the breakfast over to the table, with Dudley greedily piling the food onto his plate, Petunia and Vernon taking their portions. Elizabeth took only a couple of pieces of bacon and a bit of eggs, before Vernon glared at her. "That's enough, you won't be of any use to any man anyway, but even less so if you're fat."

Elizabeth's eyes cast on Dudley, who was about four times her size, shoveling eggs into his mouth at a fast rate and was once again she was reminded about how hypocritical Vernon was. A part of her was hoping that he would choke, it would serve the fat little pig right. Just like when she had accidentally set that snake on Dudley and Piers Polkiss at the zoo, it brought her great amusement to see Dudley at the mercy of something that he could not bully. Of course, she got a week in the cupboard for it, but it was a small price to pay. The only injustice was that the zoo did not keep Dudley, thinking he was one of the animals.

As she ate her meager portion of the meal that she slaved over, watching Dudley already complete his second helping, about to move onto the third, Elizabeth wondered about her parents, wondering if they really loved her. Surely, they could have found better guardians for her than the Dursleys. Petunia and Vernon had told her that they were no good drunks that got themselves in a car accident and while Elizabeth wanted to believe that this wasn't true, heavy amounts of alcohol was a plausible explanation how anyone could think that the Dursleys were suitable guardians for a child.

A knock on the door, was followed by the mail being pushed through the slot.

"Dudley, could you go get the mail?" suggested Vernon.

“Make Elizabeth get it,” said Dudley in a stubborn voice, as eggs hung from his lower lip, an attractive image to be sure.

“Get it then!” snapped Vernon his face turning purple and Elizabeth quickly rose to her feet, she could not stomach to see Dudley shovel anything else down his throat anyway. Moving over to the door, Elizabeth picked up the mail, seeing nothing but bills, a letter to Vernon, a letter to Dudley, some junk mail, and....this could not be right, surely, a letter addressed to her. Quickly, Elizabeth placed the envelope in her pocket, knowing that the Dursleys would immediately destroy it had they knew anyone had written to her.

“Letter for you, Dudley,” said Elizabeth passing it to Dudley before handing the other mail to Vernon, before whispering in undertone. “Didn’t know any of your friends could read or write to be honest.”

“MUM!” whined Dudley.

“To your cupboard now, I’ll let you know when you’re needed for chores,” stated Petunia, her eyes narrowing dangerous, which was what Elizabeth hoped for. Now she could open that letter in peace.

Careful not to look too eager, Elizabeth entered her cupboard, before she pulled out the letter to get a better look at it. Seeing the label, it seemed to be oddly specific, mentioning her cupboard, which meant that someone knew of her cramped living arrangements. Hopefully it was someone who was in the position to do something about the treatment she was in. She had complained about the Dursleys several times to people in power at school, even citing evidence. They said they would have the matter looked into but the next day, they always came back, yelling at her for spreading such lies to get attention. Even a few times, Elizabeth tried to run away from her relatives, but she found herself back at Number Four Privet Drive, with no memory how she got back.

Still she opened the letter.

Dear Miss Potter:

Congratulations, you have been accepted to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The term will begin on September 1st. Inside you will find a list of course materials and supplies. We await your owl by no later than July 31st.

Professor Minerva McGonagall,

Deputy Headmistress

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

Elizabeth put down the letter, in a numb shock. Surely this could not be real, there was no way this could be real. If she was a witch, surely she would have been able to turn Dudley and his gang into toads or something, when they had bullied her. It had to be some kind of practical joke, someone winding her up. She long since given up hope that anything good would happen to her to break the status quo. She would get up in the morning, get yelled at and insulted by the Dursleys, cook for the Dursleys, get yelled and insulted by the Dursleys, either go to school or do hours of chores in the summertime, get yelled at and insulted by the Dursleys, cook dinner, get yelled at and insulted by the Dursleys, do even more chores, get yelled at and insulted by the Dursleys, and then go to sleep ready to complete the cycle with the next day, with the occasional attempt to evade Dudley's gang tossed in for variety.

"THAT GIRL, SHE CONTAMITATED MY SON WITH HER ABNORMALITY!" shouted Vernon, sounded absolutely enraged and suddenly, thunderous footsteps echoed from outside the cupboard.

"Oh boy, that can't be good," muttered Elizabeth under her breath as the door was yanked open and Vernon bent over her, looking absolutely enraged.

"You!" yelled Vernon.

"What have I done wrong now?" asked Elizabeth defensively.

"You know what you did, you ruined Dudley with your freakiness," said Vernon. "You contaminated him, he's infected..."

"Now, I haven't been sick for quite some time," argued Elizabeth. "Although the rate that Dudley was wolfing down that bacon today, I came pretty..."

"That's not what I mean you stupid girl!" snapped Vernon. "He got a letter, from that place, I know you'll get one too..."

"Oh, you mean Dudley got a letter from Hogwarts," responded Elizabeth with an innocent smile and Vernon looked about to strangle her, so she thought fast on the best way to appease him. "Yeah, I did get one, it appears we've been the victim of the same prank. Kids these days, huh?"

Vernon stopped, before he breathed heavily, trying to calm himself down.

"Yes, a prank, it was a prank, I should have known," said Vernon uneasily, but Elizabeth could not help but notice that he was sweating like a rhinoceros in a sauna. "Hooligans clogging up the post system with this nonsense, they should be given the switch."

Vernon walked out, turning to his son, he seemed curious.

"No, Dudley, you've been the victim of a practical joke, son," responded Vernon briskly. "Besides, you wouldn't want to go and learn that rubbish even if it was real, you want to be a respectable, normal young man"

"It had to be real, where my room was on it," replied Dudley stubbornly.

"Come on, popkin, it might be one of your friends trying to have a little fun with you," begged Petunia, who did not want her son to turn into one of them.

"Or it could have been magic," argued Dudley. "I have to go..."

"ABSOLUTELY NOT, DUDLEY!" shouted Vernon angrily. "GO TO YOUR ROOM IMMEDIATELY AND PUT ALL OF THIS NONSENSE

OUT OF YOUR MIND. YOU'RE NOT ONE OF THEM, YOU'RE NORMAL!"

Dudley seemed shocked. His father had never yelled at him, only his cousin. He seemed scared and quickly made his way upstairs, as fast as his fat little legs could carry him.

"I'm off to work!" yelled Vernon. "Phone me immediately if any other abnormal things happen."

"Of course Vernon," said Petunia in a shaky voice, as she had never seen her husband so enraged, not even when the girl had broken all of the windows of their new car because of her freak powers, out of a fit of anger.

Elizabeth walked to outside, figuring out how she would tackle the list of chores that the Dursleys gave her. She planned on tackling the weeds first but right then, she was blocked by Dudley.

"Don't you have a five year old that you should be wailing on right now?" asked Elizabeth.

"We need to talk," said Dudley.

"Look, I have chores to do, so please leave me to it, do whatever you normally do," said Elizabeth.

"You told Dad that letter is prank, but you know it's real," responded Dudley blandly and Elizabeth just raised her eyebrow.

"Trust me Dudley, it's not real, I mean, you heard him, he's always said there's no such thing as magic," said Elizabeth. "Now move, I have a lot of chores to do."

"What if Dad is wrong?" asked Dudley, not moving.

"Trust me, he's not, and even if he is, it's not like you deserve the ability to perform magic," said Elizabeth as she was losing her patience with Dudley. "You torment everyone enough, like you need anything else."



“Yes, I could do more with magic, to put people in line, to make them pay,” responded Dudley in a dreamy voice.

“Now get out of my way, some of us actually have to work to earn our keep around here,” said Elizabeth and Dudley moved out of the way.

“It’s a wonder you have no friends,” said Dudley in a snide tone of voice.

“I have no friends, you have no brains, trust me, it evens out in the end, Diddy Duddydums,” remarked Elizabeth turning to allow Dudley’s mind to slowly process what she said as she moved outside to do her chores, in the hot baking sun, without anything to drink until she had completed her work.

Later that night, Elizabeth had washed her hands before dinner. Vernon had just returned from work, in a towering mood. Apparently he had been passed over for a promotion and the young Potter girl had the strangest feeling that this was going to somehow be her fault. Elizabeth had cautiously began to move towards the kitchen, but at that moment a knock on the door had brought her out of her thoughts.

“ANSWER THE DOOR, YOU USELESS GIRL!” shouted Vernon, who seemed to have the recent inability to talk in a normal voice, considering what had recently happened to him during that day. Elizabeth quickly opened the door, to see a middle aged woman with wearing her hair in a bun. She wondered if she was a part of a cult, but there was also this funny impression that it might not be a good idea to cross her.

“May I help you, M’am?” asked Elizabeth.

“I am Professor Minerva McGonagall, I’m from Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and I wish to speak to Petunia and Vernon Dursley,” replied McGonagall calmly.

“I don’t think this is the best time to do so,” said Elizabeth, as she remembered Vernon’s towering temper but she was also curious, time had made her think that there was a possibility that the letter

was genuine. The fact that the person who had sent the letter was standing before her made her convinced.

"I insist," said McGonagall shortly, as she walked into the house.

"Whatever it is, we're not interesting in buying!" shouted Vernon.

"No, I am not selling anything, I am here on behalf of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry to explain to you about your son's abilities, but of course you should already know, considering your niece," replied McGonagall.

"Wait a minute, what should they already know?" asked Elizabeth but Mount Vernon had blown its top once again.

"I SAW YOUR LETTER, BUT NEITHER OF THEM ARE GOING TO THAT FREAK SCHOOL TO LEARN MAGIC TRICKS!" shouted Vernon. "DUDLEY'S GOING TO SMELTINGS WHERE HE WILL BE A RESPECTABLE YOUNG MAN AND AS FOR THE GIRL, SHE'S GOING TO STONEWALL HIGH AND..."

Vernon was suddenly struck dumb by a silencing charm.

"I will remove it when your husband is ready to talk normally," said McGonagall to Petunia, who looked about ready to protest, but wilted.

"He's right, they're not being sent, my poor Dudley, one of those...people, just like Lily and her," said Petunia who looked quite depressed at the entire situation.

"One of what people, precisely?" asked Elizabeth. "Because I could have sworn that you told me that there was no such thing as magic."

"You told her that," responded McGonagall as she turned to Petunia and Vernon. "That's very foolish of you, you could have caused all of her magic to be suppressed inside herself and killed her!"

"All that Dumbledore told us in his letter was that she would stay here and if we had attempted to get rid of her, he would know," said Petunia defensively, who felt it was a good idea that Vernon was

silent, he would have said something about it being a good thing that it would have killed the freak. "She had her little fits regardless, so I don't see the harm."

McGonagall remained silent for nearly a minute. She would be having a chat with Albus before too long.

"So I am a witch," replied Elizabeth to break the silence.

"Yes, Miss Potter, you are, and so were your parents," replied McGonagall in a forced calm tone of voice.

"Yes my parents," said Elizabeth who looked disgusted, perplexing McGonagall. "Some people they turned out to be, getting drunk and them getting themselves killed in a car crash, before having me to be sent here for ten years."

McGonagall looked absolutely enraged beyond belief.

"They lied to you once again," said McGonagall. "Your parents weren't killed in a car accident, they were murdered, by You-Know-Who."

"Sorry, I don't know who," responded Elizabeth.

"She means Voldemort," supplied Petunia in a timid voice, causing McGonagall to wince. "That's what Dumbledore said in the letter anyway."

"So you lied to me again, YOU LIED TO ME!" yelled Elizabeth. "You knew all along that my parents were murdered, but you kept telling me they were drunks that got themselves killed in a car accident..."

"Yes, I feel that I need to explain this then, since everyone in the world knows the story and it's not something you can go to Hogwarts not knowing," replied McGonagall taking a breath. "Basically, to make a complicated story short, You-Know-Who found and killed your parents. He then tried to kill you but the strangest part was that something happened that caused his power to break. You must understand that You-Know-Who was the most dangerous wizard in a

century and since he was destroyed trying to kill you, you were branded as the savior of the Wizarding World.”

“This Voldemort must have been a wimp if he was beaten by her,” piped in Dudley. “She can’t even take a punch...”

“Quiet yourself, Mr. Dursley,” said McGonagall sternly.

“I find it hard to believe I beat Voldemort, I mean I was only a year old,” said Elizabeth skeptically. “It doesn’t make any sense. How could I have defeated someone that powerful?”

“I’m not the one that can answer that question,” said McGonagall with a sigh. “Just know that you are famous and there will be those who will be out to use you because of you being associated with Voldemort’s defeat.”

“She can’t be famous, it isn’t fair!” shouted Dudley. “She doesn’t have any friends, she’s nothing but a loser, a nerd...”

“Mr. Dursley, that will be sufficient,” said McGonagall sternly. “Now onto the matter at hand, you have both been invited to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, one of the best schools of magic in the world. It is an honor to be certain, congratulations to you both...”

“They’re not going,” said Petunia calmly. “Especially Dudley, I won’t have him be contaminated any more...”

“Miss Potter will attend Hogwarts, it was among her parents wishes for her to do so should anything happen to them, so you can’t overturn that,” replied McGonagall briskly. “As for your son, that is in fact your call, neither I nor Albus Dumbledore can overturn that. Be that as it may, it is also my obligation to warn you about the dangers of having an untrained witch or wizard. Their magic will continue to grow, but without a way to properly control it, it will become unstable and potentially lethal. I highly recommend that your son attends at least his first year so he can learn control, but once again that is your decision.”

“My husband will not pay for such an abnormal education,” said Petunia and Vernon nodded by her side, unable to speak still, but looking rather purple in the face, no doubt from a diatribe that could not get out.

“There is a fund that will take care of this for students who are not as well off, there might be some things that need to be bought second hand,” replied McGonagall and Elizabeth looked pleased, second hand was a lot better than what she had gotten all of her life. “I will return tomorrow morning at about nine o’clock to take these two shopping for their school supplies, of course you are welcomed to come along as well.

“We’ll pass,” said Petunia, as Vernon looked like he would have rather been hung up by his thumbs then step one foot in the Wizarding World.

“Very well then, I will be back tomorrow morning at nine o’clock, said McGonagall. “Good night to you all.”

McGonagall left the house, leaving the three Dursleys and one Potter alone. Dumbledore had intended to send Hagrid along in another week to have Elizabeth collect her things, but Minerva felt that since she was going to inform the Dursleys about their son’s magic anyway, she might as well have killed two birds with one stone. And what she saw did not paint the best picture of what was going on in that home at Number Four Privet Drive.

She was appalled at the treatment of Elizabeth. The girl had clothes that looked only slightly better than those that might be fished out of a Muggle landfill and she looked a bit small for her age come to think of it. The comments made by the Dursley boy also unsettled her and Vernon Dursley seemed to have severe anger management issues, amplified by the mere presence of his niece. The lies told about Lily and James, despite Albus writing them a letter explaining it, were absolutely slanderous. But, perhaps the most terrifying thing of all was that the letter that she had sent to the Potter girl was addressed to the cupboard under the stairs. Despite Dumbledore assuring everyone that the girl would be perfectly safe, Minerva wondered if he

had really checked up on her at all and had just assumed since the protections were still intact, she must be alive.

If this was Albus Dumbledore's idea of safe, Minerva McGonagall would hate to see how horrifying his idea of someone being in danger. She vowed to confront him about this once she returned to Hogwarts.

### Chapter Three: Shopping and Sorting:

It had been a long day for Albus Dumbledore, as he sat in his office later in the evening. Word had just gotten to him within the last hour that the man who was supposed to be his Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher for the year, Professor Quirrel, had an unfortunate accident. After returning from a trip from Albania, the young teacher had a sudden impulse to steal the Philosopher's Stone belonging to Albus's mentor, Nicholas Flamel. Apparently Nicholas had the Stone out of Gringotts to get his yearly supply of the Elixir of Life and thus had the Stone at his home. At that moment, Quirrell had broke into the Flamel Home to steal the stone but unfortunately for the now deceased teacher, he ran into one of Nicholas's security traps. The Ministry still had not found all the pieces of Quirrell. Rumors that he had been working for Voldemort or rather what was left of him were discouraged by Minister Fudge. Fudge claimed that it was most likely the work of a greedy wizard, who had ambitious of making some quick gold by getting his hands on the Stone.

No matter the reason of why Quirrell suddenly went after the Stone, Dumbledore was in a dilemma. Hogwarts was a month away and he needed to find a capable teacher for one of the most crucial subjects in the school. There were no lack of applicants, but Dumbledore needed to arrange a time to meet each and every one of them in person. Dumbledore had to complete the yearly security check around the school, to ensure that there were no flaws that a dangerous threat could exploit and slip into the school. Magic tended to live a life of its own and the magic that held up Hogwarts was no different. On occasion, new flaws were discovered that Dumbledore worked hard to correct. As Headmaster, the safety of the students was a key priority.

"Come in Minerva!" called Dumbledore without looking up as his deputy Headmistress had entered the office, looking irritated, which was never a good sign. "Do sit down, take a seat, and tell me what brings you here at this time."

"I had to visit a Muggle family to explain to them the magical world, perhaps you've heard of them, their name is Dursley," replied Minerva.

"Now, Minerva, I appreciate your efforts and dedication to your job, but there was no need to explain to the Dursleys young Elizabeth's situation, they already know of it," replied Dumbledore calmly. "I did expect that they may put up some resistance but if a letter was not sent back within the week, I would send Hagrid along to explain the situation and convince them to let her attend."

"No Albus, it was not for Elizabeth's place at Hogwarts that I came although I was quite glad that I did, as I did tell you we might need to take a closer look for a long time, but Petunia's son has apparently shown some signs of magic," said Minerva.

"Young Dudley is a wizard then, well that was unexpected," replied Dumbledore lightly, truthfully he had not gotten a chance to look over the class list for this year, all he knew was that the Girl-Who-Lived will be beginning this year. "Petunia and Vernon understood, did they not?"

"Only after I silenced Vernon Dursley and explained to Petunia the dangers of having an untrained wizard," replied Minerva in a testy voice. "That's not what worries me, I got a good look at their niece."

Dumbledore sat, awaiting what Minerva was about to say. He had gotten a few reports from Arabella Figg over the years and while Elizabeth Potter had not been treated as well as her cousin Dudley and had gotten extremely defensive when she was asked about her life at home, there had been no signs of physical abuse from the Dursleys. As a result, Dumbledore decided not to press the issue further and take a closer look. There were a couple of instances where she had ran away from home and she had to be returned for her own safety. Even if Voldemort was severely weakened, there were others out there who wanted revenge and many more who wanted to make a name for themselves by killing the Girl-Who-Lived.

"Albus, she looks undersized for a girl her age, while the Dursley boy looks like he is eating for about three," said Minerva. "Her clothes look only slightly above rags and the Hogwarts letter was addressed to the cupboard under the stairs. Furthermore, the Dursleys might not be abusing the girl physically, but emotionally might be another



matter for all you know. And not to mention their son, he is a textbook bully if I've ever seen one. Petunia and Vernon have done nothing to discourage him."

"Thank you for the information Minerva," said Dumbledore calmly, not batting an eyelash. "Your concerns are valid, I will speak to Petunia in person tomorrow and see if the matter can be rectified."

"It might be much easier if you just remove the girl from their care, then try to force those people to change," said Minerva, looking at Dumbledore through narrowed eyes but Dumbledore did not back down.

"If only it were that easy," said Dumbledore cryptically. Truthfully, Dumbledore could not tell the main reason why Elizabeth was sent to live at the Dursleys, what he had found out when he ran those tests both twins all those years ago. There was a chance that he could have been mistaken and on this account, the Headmaster did in fact hope this was one of those occasions where he was incorrect.

"I just hope that you know what you're doing, Albus," said Minerva in a tired voice. "She doesn't seem like she'll forgive you if she ever finds out that you were the one that sent her there. Right now, she thinks it was Lily and James and she's doesn't seem all too fond of them."

"Yes, I was aware that Elizabeth did not care that much for the Dursleys ,this is no news to me, Minerva, I have heard of their differences in the past," stated Dumbledore in a tired voice.

"Not, the Dursleys, that wouldn't be a concern, I'm talking about Lily and James, she thinks it was their fault she was sent to live with the Dursleys!" yelled Minerva and Dumbledore looked surprised and only a tiny bit ashamed.

"My intention was never to make the poor girl hate her parents, Minerva," said Dumbledore calmly. "In life, there are difficult choices, that sometimes there is no answer that is completely right from all angles."

Minerva calmly sat, in slight confusion and mostly irritation. She absolutely hated it when Albus would talk in such an evasive matter. He had been spending too much time at the Wizengamot; it was starting to effect how he dealt with other things.

"Is there anything else that you need to talk to me about Minerva?" asked Dumbledore.

"No, there will be nothing else," responded Minerva with a curt nod. "I'll be seeing you soon enough I expect."

"Yes, Minerva, good night," said Dumbledore, as he rummaged through the papers on his desk. He had a notice reminding him of a Wizengamot meeting to talk about a new piece of legislation on vampires. The recent rash of vampire attacks had mandated this. Several witches and wizards had been found, with severely blood loss, weakened and many were clamoring for something to be done. Albus hoped that the matter can be resolved without a further restriction on the rights of magical creatures but it might be an uphill battle. Vampires hated humans as much as certain wizards hated all magical creatures.

Elizabeth was lead down the streets of London the next morning, followed closely by Professor McGonagall. Dudley also was close by them but she was keeping as far away from her cousin as possible. All morning, Dudley had bragged about knowing that he was special all of his life and how that he would be better at magic than Elizabeth was, saying that he would show her up. Elizabeth was amused at this, considering that every subject in school, she had done well and Dudley had set new standards for horrible.

"Now, there are two ways to get into Diagon Alley," said Minerva in a calm voice, speaking of the place where she had informed the two children that they would find everything that they required from Hogwarts. "Most people use the entrance through the Leaky Cauldron, that pub right there."

She pointed it out, with Elizabeth looking at it, memorizing exactly where it was located, but Dudley just seemed to be only mildly interested. He did have a rather short attention span on many things.

“Now to get into Diagon Alley through that way, you must go to the back of the pub, and tap on the wall three times with your wand, which will open Diagon Alley,” said Minerva. “Now most people are comfortable, especially those with Muggle relatives, by going through this way, by travelling through this side street right here. It is charmed so that only people who have the ability to do magic can pass through it or lead their relatives through it towards Diagon Alley. Now come, we have much to get, but first off to Gringotts, the Wizarding bank.”

With that, the two children followed the Hogwarts Deputy Headmistress down the Muggle street towards Diagon Alley, mostly because Minerva knew that if they had went in through the Leaky Cauldron, there would be a mob scene if they found out the Girl-Who-Lived was in public and thus they would not get their business done. Minerva still had a few more Muggle families to visit after this was concluded and did not wish to be stalled up by idiots trying to make a celebrity out of a girl who barely just found out that the world she was famous in existed.

Harry was excited about his first year of Hogwarts and most importantly getting his first wand. He managed to practice a little wandless magic before and read any book that he could get his hands on. His adopted mother had followed Harry from the Leaky Cauldron into the alley. Right now, Harry had the appearance of short straight brown hair and blue eyes, thanks to the Metamorphmagus abilities that he received in the blood adoption ritual. The Black family had Metamorphmagi in the family occasionally for generation and Harry thought it was much easier to have these abilities. There were potions and spells that altered appearances but since they needed to be occasionally reapplied to maintain the altered appearance. Metamorphmagus abilities varied from person to person, but even most with slight ability could alter there appearance to fool anyone of their identity, providing of course they kept a low profile and did nothing to draw attention to cause someone to take a closer look. Harry's powers was slightly more advanced than his older sister's, as while Nymphadora needed to concentrate to change form, Harry could use his abilities as naturally as taking a breath. Other than that, there were no differences between their abilities.

“You have your list, Harry?” asked Andromeda calmly.

“Yes, Mum, I have it right here,” replied Harry with a nod, double checking the list. “I still can’t believe that we aren’t allowed a broomstick during our first year. If I wanted to go outside and just fly to have fun, I have to borrow one of the school’s brooms and if they’re even half as bad as Nymphadora says...I mean, it’s not like I want to even play Quidditch or anything..”

“Every child complains about that rule, although it’s mostly because they want to play Quidditch,” said Andromeda calmly. “Second year will come before you know it and then you’ll be able to bring your broomstick.”

Harry just nodded, it would be one thing to deprive first year students of playing Quidditch, there was always a chance for injuries. Still, banning them from being able to even bring a broomstick was criminal as far as Harry was concerned.

“Andromeda fancy meeting you here of all days,” stated the voice of Minerva McGonagall that caused Harry to snap out and see that Professor Minerva McGonagall, with two figures in the distance that Harry could not exactly see, as they stood in the background.

“Hello Minerva, I’m just taking Harry here to get his school supplies, we’re about to go into Gringotts right now,” remarked Andromeda.

“Hello, Professor,” added Harry.

“Mr. Black, I trust you are doing well,” replied Minerva and Harry nodded in response. “Mr. Dursley, Miss Potter, this is Andromeda Black and her son Harry. Harry will be starting his first year soon.”

“Pleased to meet you both, I’m Elizabeth Potter,” replied Elizabeth in a polite tone, after all, these two had done nothing to offend her yet.

“Pleased to meet you Elizabeth, are you going into Gringotts as well?” asked Andromeda calmly, trying to mask the shock of meeting Harry’s twin, but if the girl had noticed something, she did not say anything.

“Likewise with me too,” said Harry in a calm voice, as if he was greeting someone for the first time, not a long lost twin that he had been separated from for ten years. He knew this moment was coming for some time and had prepared himself for it, but it was a bit sooner than he had hoped. “So, are you looking forward to Hogwarts?”

“It sounds very interesting, learning at magic, up until last night, I thought it didn’t exist,” remarked Elizabeth calmly, as she looked at Harry curiously. She was getting the strangest feeling that she had met him somewhere before but did not tell Harry this. The last thing she wanted was Harry to think she was insane, he did seem nice enough, at least for right now. “I hope that Hogwarts will be a great experience.”

“It normally is,” replied Harry with a nod, as they walked into the bank, trying not to look like he was taking the shabby state of her clothing in, but it caused Harry to wonder about the Dursleys. Ever since he learned about them, he feared for his twin sister. Physically she looked fine, a bit undersized and the clothing was a bit shabby. The duct tape on her glasses also stuck out to Harry. “Don’t worry Elizabeth, I’m sure you’ll do great.”

“You’re just saying that, because I’m famous,” said Elizabeth in a slightly defensive tone of voice and Harry just raised an eyebrow.

“You’re famous?” asked Harry, even though he knew the answer, but he saw that she seemed to be a bit defensive on the subject.

“Of course, you know the Girl-Who-Lived, the savior who defeated Voldemort, despite being barely old enough to walk,” said Elizabeth who thought everyone had heard of her by the way McGonagall was talking.

“I might have read something about that somewhere, once or twice,” stated Harry, which caused Elizabeth to give a brief smile towards him. “Now, you’re not going to be hung up on your fame, are you?”

“Absolutely not, they don’t even know who I am and I bet they don’t even want to bother to know the real me,” said Elizabeth. “I know, I should be grateful but...”

“No, you shouldn’t be, those people aren’t worth it,” said Harry. “The same people who suck up to you one week, will stab you in the back the next week.”

“I never had any friends when I was at the Dursleys and I don’t think I’ll have any real friends here, but that’s all right, I’ve survived before and I will again,” said Elizabeth. “Who would want to know the real me anyway if they can just hero worship a celebrity?”

“I would,” said Harry calmly. “Believe me, your fame doesn’t make any difference to me and for the record, I know you’d do great even if you didn’t have a lightning bolt scar on your head.”

“Thanks,” muttered Elizabeth trying not to look too desperate, as she saw Professor McGonagall and Andromeda up at the front desk, with some horrid looking creatures and Dudley seemed to be looking at her and Harry with an expression on his face, that Elizabeth quite frankly did not like. Dudley stepped forward right between her and Harry.

“You, I want to talk to you know, Black,” grunted Dudley.

“I’m talking to my friend right now, could you please leave?” suggested Harry coolly, even though he wanted to hex what he had assumed was the spawn of his aunt and her husband. While he did not know any dangerous spells, he was sure he could send this thing screaming with a few sparks. He stepped to side, to see what this inept child wanted.

“No, I’m warning you that no one gets to be her friend, she’s nothing but a loser, a nerd, a scrawny little girl who’s a wimp,” said Dudley. “You are better off learning this now, abandoning her like everyone else including her parents did.

Harry felt enraged, that this idiot would say that his and Elizabeth’s parents abandoned them and there was no doubt in Harry’s mind that

this was not the first time that Dudley bullied someone that tried to be friends with Elizabeth. Only Harry would not be pushed around by something so pathetic.

"Listen here, Dursley, don't you dare talk about anyone like that, you're no prize yourself," said Harry dangerously and Dudley took a step back, perhaps bullying this Black kid without back up was not a good idea. "Elizabeth is a much better person than you'll ever be, no matter how many people you bully."

Dudley looked dumbstruck, no one his own age had ever stood up to him, barring his cousin. Of course, when that happened, Dudley and his friends made sure she paid for disrespecting them.

"I know, you don't want to be my friend anymore, I understand," said Elizabeth as Harry walked over to her but Harry shook his head.

"No, the idiot thought he could threaten me, as if," answered Harry and Elizabeth's spirits raised slightly.

"Yes, he picks on others smaller and weaker than him to hide the pathetic Mummy's boy he is," said Elizabeth. "He and his friends basically ran our school, they are among the biggest in our class and not exactly the brightest, but they stuck together and everyone was afraid of him."

"You never were though," said Harry logically.

"No, never, I knew exactly how pathetic Dudley was," replied Elizabeth swiftly. "Others tried to be friends with me, they only lasted as long as it took for Dudley to find out. I didn't find it surprising after the first few times and I got back in Dudley in other ways. My marks are much higher than his ever was."

"Good you should be proud of that, and how do you feel about him being a wizard?" asked Harry and Elizabeth sighed.

"I'm a bit scared about what he might do when he learns a bit of magic, not to me I can handle myself, but to others, he isn't shy about

bullying others much younger,” said Elizabeth. “He’ll be much worse with magic.”

“Not unless he wants to be expelled from Hogwarts and brought up on charges from the Ministry, you can’t do magic on Muggles,” said Harry calmly, as he looked over his shoulder where the two adults looked ready as a goblin stood in the distance, with a rather impatient expression on its face. “Anyway, we can talk later, that goblin looks irritated at being kept waiting.”

“A goblin, so that’s what that thing was,” commented Elizabeth as she walked over with Harry, with Dudley, Minerva, and Andromeda already in the cart, along with the goblin. She was skeptical on how five people and a goblin could fit into one cart, but she guessed that was the magic of magic.

“Yes, I know it’s hard to take it, especially when you just found out this world exists,” muttered Harry. “You’ll all learn soon enough, there are others who come in blind as well...”

Elizabeth nodded, there were others, but others did not have the exceptions placed upon them. No matter how many times she tried to reassure herself that she was better off not worrying about these people, there was still a bit of apprehension in her mind.

“This is your vault, Miss Potter,” stated the goblin in an indifferent voice, as the girl climbed out, with Minerva handing over the key.

“You’ll be needing this I believe, Professor Dumbledore has been hanging onto it for years,” remarked McGonagall. “I must take your cousin to the Hogwarts vault to get the money to...”

“Wait, how come she gets her own vault, but I don’t!” whined Dudley which caused McGonagall to narrow her eyes at the Dursley child. It was obvious now more than ever that his parents allowed him to get away with a lot at home, more than any child should have.

“Her parents left her gold to allow her to live comfortably through Hogwarts, until she has finished her education,” said McGonagall calmly. “Now come Mr. Dursley, we still have much to do today.”



Dudley looked sour, as Elizabeth looked on, with Harry watching as Dudley left.

“You enjoyed that didn’t you?” asked Harry.

“It’s not often that I have something that he doesn’t unless you count brains,” replied Elizabeth as she held up the key to the vault, which swung open. She was almost blinded by the glint of gold, along with silver and bronze. She knew nothing about Wizarding currency, but there appeared to be more money that she could ever use.

“Now it’s important to understand that the most important coins are Galleons, next are Sickles, you can get seventeen Sickles to a Galleon, and Knuts are the last important coins, with twenty nine of them to a Sickle,” explained Harry with Elizabeth nodding indicating that she understood. “For each Galleon, it roughly converts into five pounds Muggle money after exchange fees, although it depends on various factors, it’s been known to be more or less several times in the past. Unless you plan on converting either way, you really don’t have to worry about that all much.”

Elizabeth began to pile money in the bag, until she felt that she had enough and a bit extra just in case she needed it for an emergency during her first year at Hogwarts. As she walked by, as Harry turned to his vault, a growing feeling of dread appeared on her face. A look that Harry immediately caught on to.

“The Dursleys will take this all from me when they find out, they’ll never allow me to have that much money,” said Elizabeth. “Or any money for that matter....”

“Actually, they can’t, the goblins won’t allow it,” interjected Andromeda. “Your parents left the money to you, not to them. If they try to demand the money, the goblins will just throw them out of the bank.”

“With a few broken bones to remember them,” said Harry as he opened his vault. “I’m sure they have more than enough money, considering it looks like your cousin eats really well.”

“Yes, and Vernon gets a new car every year it seems,” said Elizabeth and Harry frowned at this bit of news, it just showed how misplaced the priorities of the Dursleys were. “At least now that I have money, I can finally get some decent clothes or they do sell normal clothes in this place, don’t they?”

“If you mean Muggle clothes, then yes they do, in fact, the same place where they sell robes, the only difference is they are charmed to last a bit longer,” said Andromeda who was beginning to realize that all her reservations about the Dursleys were well placed, she just hoped that she could convince Dumbledore that while Elizabeth was safe, she might not have been treated the best. Dumbledore always meant well but when he had an idea of what the right thing to do was in his head, it was very difficult to change it.

Much of their shopping trip went off as normal. Elizabeth utilized the money that she inherited from her parents to its fullest, getting a completely wardrobe, both magical and Muggle. Even though his Muggle clothing was as nice as ever, it did warm Elizabeth’s heart to know that thanks to the limited funding he received from the Hogwarts fund, Dudley’s robes would be slightly less quality than hers. Also, under Harry and Andromeda’s assistance and with the approval of Professor McGonagall, she went to a magical eye doctor that was located in Diagon Alley. It turned out her glasses were several years out of date. She hated her glasses to begin with, so when she had the option to get magical contacts she jumped to the opportunity to get them.

When they reached magical creature shop, Elizabeth decided she want a pet. No matter what she got, she reasoned that it would be more intelligent than all three of the Dursleys put together. Consulting her list, she was disappointed that she could only take an owl, a cat, or a toad.

“I’d really wish I could take a snake,” muttered Elizabeth to Harry in a disappointed tone of voice, causing Harry to raise his eyebrow. “I learned something interesting at the zoo that apparently I can understand snakes, is that common?”

"You talked to it, I take it," said Harry and Elizabeth nodded it. "It looks like you have a rare gift called Parseltongue, it gives you the ability to talk to snakes and understand what they're saying. I wouldn't advise advertising you have that gift though."

"Really, why?" asked Elizabeth curiously.

"Because, people will prosecute you for having the gift, only because others who have had it in the past have not been the most noble," said Harry. "I know, it's stupid, but you'll find that a lot in this world is."

"A lot in the other world is as well, believe me," replied Elizabeth, as she remembered all the times she was teased because of her clothes and glasses at school, as she looked around. The best choice seemed to be an owl. Quite frankly, she could see no use at all for a toad and she had her fill of cats after all the time she spent at Mrs. Figg's house. So an owl would be the best pet for her, besides from what Harry told her it was the main way to communicate. So even if she was in the Dursley, she would have a link to the Wizarding World.

After she got a large regal looking brown owl, Elizabeth, Dudley, and Harry made their way to perhaps the most important part of the shopping trip, to get their first wands. The most famous wand maker in Britain was a man by the name of Ollivander, his family was said to be making wands for centuries, wands purchased by some of the most famous and infamous wizards in the world.

"Good afternoon," replied Ollivander in a cryptic tone of voice and Elizabeth felt he would not be that much out of place as a character in a horror movie by his slightly creepy demeanor. "Elizabeth Potter, I must say, I had been expecting you for sometime and Mr. Dudley Dursley, a bit of a surprise. I remember seeing your mother when her sister, Miss Potter's mother, was buying her first wand. She seemed a bit disappointed that she did not have the gift and I fear that might have translated into jealousy. And yes, Mr. Black, delighted to see you as well..."

"Mr. Ollivander, as fascinating as this is, these children do need their wands," interjected McGonagall and Ollivander just nodded in understanding.

"Very well, Mr. Dursley, do tell me which arm is your wand are?" asked Ollivander calmly and Dudley looked a bit confused.

"It's the same as the hand you write with," said Harry with a roll of his eyes.

"Right," grunted Dudley and Ollivander nodded, before he put Dudley through the paces, trying different wands. The child seemed rather impatient, as every time he had an impressive wand, Mr. Ollivander snatched it from his hands and the more wands he tried, the least impressive they were.

"Now no need to be impatient, the wand chooses the user, I have yet to fail to match a wand to a wizard, with countless possibilities at my disposal," said Ollivander, as he held out a rather short wand. "Palm, with a hair from an aged unicorn, five inches, not that good for sophisticated spell work, but good to add a bit of brute force to your spells."

Dudley took the wand and sparks flew out it immediately.

"And we have a match, that wand suits you, it has chosen you, Mr. Dursley," replied Ollivander lightly and Dudley seemed a bit irritated, this wand looked rather lame, like something his cousin should have as far as he was concerned. "Now Miss Potter, your turn."

Elizabeth waved the wands once again. Unlike Dudley, it seemed like the more wands she went through, the better they seemed to get. Ollivander was really excited.

"It appears that an unusual combination would be the one that would suit you, unique and perhaps rarely used, a mixture that can be extremely powerful but difficult to use when in the wrong hands," remarked Ollivander as he pulled out a wand that looked sturdy and quite durable. Elizabeth could feel something as he leaned forward to hand it to her. "Try this, eleven inches, elm, with the fang of a particular venomous Runespoor within, cased in solidified dragon blood. Very useful in performing more questionable branches of

magic, but considering those branches require a great deal of power to begin with, it is a useful wand all around. Give it a wave.”

Elizabeth waved the wand and she felt warmth the likes of which she’s never received before as it gave off magic.

“Very good then, this wand is made for you, rather different than the one that gave you this scar, but extremely powerful none the same,” replied Ollivander. “Perhaps even more powerful, but its difficult put a measuring stick on the power of wands technically speaking.”

Elizabeth nodded, looking at her wand, it radiated magic, it was the definition of what she felt a magic wand should be.

“And now, Mr. Black, I believe it will be your turn,” stated Ollivander and Elizabeth stuck around, indicating that she wanted to see Harry get his wand. Dudley rolled his eyes, but a stern look from McGonagall had stopped him from saying much. Harry went through many wands, but Ollivander seemed to grow curious, as he looked from Elizabeth to Harry briefly, before assuming a business like demeanor. “I do wonder, if this wand will work...”

Ollivander trailed off before he handed a wand off to Harry.

“Another rarity, eleven inches as well, Runespoor fang as well from the same beast, once again cased in solidified dragon blood within the core, but made of holly wood instead of elm, give it a way,” replied Ollivander and Harry raised the wand, he felt it had a great deal of power and Harry waved it, with sparks coming out, with Ollivander looking rather pleased. “Quite interesting and rare that a creature would give two materials to be used in a wand core, even more so that the two wands would be received in the same day, but I suppose it is quite interesting all the same.”

Elizabeth and Harry had no idea what Ollivander was talking about but it seemed like neither believed that they would get anywhere with any line of questioning. They just proceeded to pay for their wands and the two groups separated with Harry looking as if he wanted to protest Elizabeth returning to the Dursleys, but just settled on saying

good bye and insisting that she write to him if there were any problems.

“That took every bit of self control I had to not blurt out we were twins,” said Harry, after Elizabeth, Dudley, and McGonagall left and Andromeda gave Harry a sympathetic look. “I don’t really like the idea of her going back to...those people.”

Andromeda had a feeling that her adopted son was going to use a different word to describe the Dursleys, but caught himself.

“I didn’t like it for the beginning, I know Lily and James wouldn’t have either and Sirius, well he most certainly would have not, but the Ministry has agreed that she’s best and safest put there,” replied Andromeda. “Every year I’ve wrote to them to check up on them but it’s done no good at all.”

“If the Dursleys harmed her in anyway...” said Harry before trailing off.

“Physically, I don’t think they would, they would have to answer a lot of awkward questions,” said Andromeda as he reached the Leaky Cauldron. “She seems rather well adjusted...considering the signs that she would be anything but. The moment I can get through to someone that can get her out of there, I will.”

“I know, but I wish it was soon,” said Harry, Dudley had told him enough about the older Dursleys. Still, he would be seeing her in a month at Hogwarts and she would be away from the Dursleys for ten months of the year. It was a small consolation, at least until they could convince the Ministry to take a closer look at the Dursleys beyond what Dumbledore was saying and see that Elizabeth would be better off anywhere else. Until then, legally speaking, all hands were tied.

Lucius Malfoy stood in the Minister of Magic’s office, awaiting a meeting with both Minister Fudge and Head Auror Scrimgeour. Word of the Quirrell incident had gotten to the Daily Prophet and quite frankly Lucius was intrigued. The Philosopher’s Stone had been a coveted object by many dark wizards for years and even The Dark Lord had been intrigued by it, but decided to pursue other avenues of

immortality. They sadly did not work and thus the Dark Lord was vanquished by Elizabeth Potter. Lucius had always prepared himself an out in case his former master failed, he was not as devoted to the Dark Lord, but rather to the cause that he spoke of. If anything Lucius Malfoy could do was take advantage of an opportunity to achieve his own ends and he joined up with the Dark Lord to do so. The connections that he forged throughout the years had allowed him to evade Azkaban and avoid losing his sanity and mind.

Still, life held many opportunities but it was up anyone who wished to make anything of themselves to seize them, as he constantly told his son Draco. In fact, recently, Lucius felt he had to take a more active role in his son's life, to make sure he was ready to uphold the Malfoy family name once it was his time to take over as head of the family. The previous day, on the child's birthday, he arranged a gathering of children of well connected Ministry officials, so Draco could be accustomed to those who he would have to work with later on. Some of them were older than Draco and for some reason, Draco felt uncomfortable in their presence. Surely, he understood the necessity of forging these alliances, rather than waste time on friends that would get him nowhere. The three individuals that Draco thought were his friends would get him nowhere, even though Lucius felt that the Black boy had potential, if guided properly.

"Lucius, I understand you have something to show us today!" called Cornelius Fudge in a boisterous voice as Scrimgeour just stood back with a stoic nod.

"Indeed Minister, Auror Scrimgeour," said Lucius calmly. "I have heard of the recent plight of the Auror Department, as everyday robes have proved quite troubling for battle, easily damaged and ill equipped to prevent injury. We have too many dangerous threats and too few Aurors, we cannot have any indisposed due to faulty robes. So, I have paid for the best to solve this problem."

Lucius held up a common black robe that looked no similar to any other robe.

"These robes block out most spells or at the very least lessen the impact, they are charmed to not tear, adjust for the size of the person

wearing them, and also able to adjust for climate control,” said Lucius and the two wizards in the room looked intrigued. “Gentlemen, I have confidence that these robes will revolutionize the Auror Department.”

“How much to require for these robes, Lucius?” asked Scrimgeour calmly, as he looked at the elder Malfoy.

“Not one Knut, Rufus, in fact, I will be willing to donate all twelve of the robes that my associates have completed to the Auror Department and if you require more, than we can work out an agreement when that time comes,” said Lucius smoothly. “All I require is that you give me regular reports on any defects that the robes have.”

“I believe that will be most acceptable, don’t you Rufus?” asked Fudge and the Head of the Auror office nodded.

“Very well Lucius, perhaps this will allow the public to become more confident in the Ministry’s ability to maintain a stable government if our Aurors aren’t susceptible to injuries,” said Scrimgeour.

“Of course, it will Rufus, this could bring in the dawn for a new era for the Wizarding World, it should cut down on dark magical activity greatly at the very least,” said Fudge, who visualized the positive effect that this would have on his public image. “So Lucius, you have yourself a deal.”

“Excellent Minister, this will be a benefit to all,” said Lucius. “The other robes will be sent within the next couple of days, but I may see you before then.”

“Yes all this vampire business, the Wizengamot is debating for a resolution right now,” said Fudge. “Whatever way it turns, I value your insight on where to turn next, Lucius.”

“I’m certain you do, Minister,” said Lucius. “If that will be all, I need to leave to attend a meeting of the Board of Governors, the Girl-Who-Lived is attending this year and we want to ensure her safety within Hogwarts. It would be a nightmare if she comes to any harm.”



“Ah yes, Elizabeth Potter is beginning, it’s a shame that I can’t meet with her right now, it would raise the spirits of the Wizarding World, but Dumbledore insisted that it would compromise her safety,” said Fudge. “Good bye Lucius, I have to be leaving right now.”

“As do I Minister, I’m certain Rufus is busy as always,” said Lucius swiftly and Scrimgeour nodded, before Fudge and Scrimgeour left. Once he was certain they were gone, Lucius stepped forward, tapping his wand to a small cube that he removed from his robes three times before he talked into it. “Yes, I am having the robes tested, for any defects, the charms to block sunlight have been placed in. I understand, you are impatient, but trust me, both of us will benefit in the end. Yes, Elizabeth Potter, my son has been instructed to befriend her, to allow me access to her but why her? You seem obsessed with capturing her, but mind enlightening me why?”

Lucius stood but he had no response for his question.

“I’ll be in touch when I have further information on the status of the robes you commissioned,” said Lucius who had noticed that his latest associate had been very reluctant to part with any information but that was such for their type. They thought themselves to be above humans.

September First had come already and Elizabeth was already in an irritated mood, as she boarded the Hogwarts Express. Her cousin was being his usual oafish self, nearly causing them to be late because he just had to have a fifth helping of Breakfast. She got into an argument with her Uncle Vernon about the platform, Nine and Three Quarters, saying that it was likely built between the middle of Platforms Nine and Ten, due to it being magical. Vernon yelled about how he was not going to let his son run into a solid wall so Elizabeth decided to push her way through, despite a heavy trunk that she could barely carry. If Dudley had missed the train because his stupid parents did not believe her, that was his problem.

Because of that heavy trunk, Elizabeth came to the conclusion that the minute she got to school, she was looking up a spell to cause things to be lighter. The day got so much more wonderful, when a pair of red headed twins that had helped her load her trunk onto the

train had found out she was Elizabeth Potter and announced that fact quite vocally. No doubt it was the shock of seeing a person they must have heard about their whole lives, but still Elizabeth hoped to avoid people knowing who she was until she got to Hogwarts. Now, knowing how fast rumors spread, the entire train would know before it even left the station.

Truthfully the moment she returned from Diagon Alley things had been a bit better. She got move in Dudley's second room, a living arrangement that caused Dudley to have a tantrum that shook the house. She had much better clothes and did not have those ugly taped up glasses. The Dursleys had found out from their money from Dudley, but other than cast a few dark looks, they did nothing to try and force her to hand it over. Not that she would have, the Dursleys would have to kill her to get their hands on one Knut. In fact, they for the most part avoided her, except at meals. It was for the best, as it allowed her time to read her school books in peace and quite.

"Elizabeth, there you are, I thought you missed the train!" called Harry as Elizabeth turned to acknowledge him. In truth, Harry also suspected the Dursleys might try something to keep her from attending Hogwarts.

"Hi, Harry," said Elizabeth in a happy voice, it might have sounded silly considering she only knew Harry for a month, but she considered him to be like a brother that she never had. "Ready for Hogwarts?"

"Ready as I'll ever be," said Harry. "I think it would be a good idea to find a compartment out of the way."

"Good idea Harry, I was thinking the same thing," said Elizabeth as Harry magically dragged their trunks behind them, as Elizabeth looked on. "You're going to have to teach me that spell."

"It's not really taught for a couple of years, it's third year magic, my sister Nymphadora taught me it," said Harry. "Although I wouldn't call her Nymphadora to her face, she doesn't like her name for some reason and prefers to be called Tonks."

“Why?” asked Elizabeth, who was confused at how someone could get Tonks out of Nymphadora.

“My mother was married to a man named Ted Tonks, but he died just before I was born,” said Harry and Elizabeth nodded in understanding, before she realized something.

“But, your last name is Black, isn’t it?” asked Elizabeth.

“Yes, Mum’s maiden name, she had it changed back right after he was killed so that would be my last name I when I was born,” said Harry. “I don’t know exact reason she did that, she always changes the subject when it comes up, when someone asks why my sister and I have two last names.”

Elizabeth and Harry reached a compartment towards the very back of the train and sat down, talking about the classes at Hogwarts, with Harry keeping half of an eye on the door. Draco had said that he would find Harry once he could get away from Crabbe and Goyle. Unfortunately, after a few minutes, there conversation was interrupted by a very unwelcome to Harry presence. Harry tried to look indifferent.

“Well are you just going to stand there and gawk at me all day or are you going to say something?” asked Elizabeth in an irritated voice as she looked at the red haired boy in the entrance to the compartment.

“Er, well, I was wondering if I could sit in here, you know everything else was packed,” stated Ron nervously and Elizabeth just gritted sighed, she passed several empty compartments on her way here and in fact, she could seen an empty compartment over the boy’s shoulder. “Well, can...Black what are you doing here?”

“Talking with my friend, Ronald Weasley,” said Harry coolly. “Of course, I think Elizabeth won’t really mind you sitting here, providing you conduct yourself like a civilized human being.”

Ron seemed to want to retort but he sat down, staring at Elizabeth. Quite frankly, after a couple of minutes, he was starting to creep her out.

“What do you want?” asked Elizabeth.

“Well, I was wondering, if I could see your scar,” replied Ron as he worked on the nerve to ask what he wanted.

“Oh you want see your scar, seeing a mark on my forehead would make your day, wouldn’t it?” asked Elizabeth, as Harry winced, this was going to end badly. However Ron was oblivious to this and looked eager. “That would really thrill you, wouldn’t it, make you pleased, by seeing something that I only have because some lunatic killed my parents and tried to kill me.”

“So can I see it?” asked Ron eagerly as Harry sighed and was about to throw Ron out of the compartment, when the door slid open once again. A round faced boy that Harry knew was Neville Longbottom entered the compartment. He was nice enough, but lacked a backbone to stand up to others and Harry lacked the patience to put up with people like that.

“Yes,” said Harry coolly as he looked at Neville.

“I lost my toad, I was wondering if any of you have seen it,” said Neville nervously.

“No, we haven’t seen any toad, but perhaps you should be glad that you lost it, perhaps you could get a decent pet,” said Elizabeth and Neville did not know exactly how to deal with this.

“Well if you see him...” said Neville as he backed off as Elizabeth just rolled her eyes at him.

“So, anyway Elizabeth, about your scar?” asked Ron.

“No you can’t see it, of course if you want one, I’m sure I can have it arranged,” said Elizabeth in an agitated voice.

“Er, I suppose you’re still sensitive about that,” said Ron and Elizabeth sighed, finally he got it. “So, I heard you live with Muggles, what are they like anyway?”

"Idiots, the whole lot of them," said Elizabeth and Harry just snickered, at Ron's befuddled expression. "Especially my relatives, they set the evolutionary clock back. Darwin would be rolling over in his grave if he saw my cousin. If they all died in their sleep tomorrow, it wouldn't matter to me too much."

"Right, so...what's your Quidditch Team?" asked Ron.

"Depends what's yours?" asked Elizabeth.

"The Chudley Cannons," stated Ron proudly.

"I don't know a damn thing about Quidditch, but if you like these Chudley Cannons, then I like any team but them," said Elizabeth. "Of course Quidditch looks to be a stupid sport to begin with from what I've read."

"It is, but flying is pretty fun," commented Harry and Ron look mortified that two people had dared put down Quidditch and his beloved Chudley Cannons, but before he could go into a rant about the virtues of both, the door slid open again.

"Excuse me, have any of you seen a toad, a boy named Neville has lost one," said a girl with bushy brown hair, that made Elizabeth feel so much better about her own unruly hair.

"No we haven't we told him when he came through here not even five minutes ago," said Elizabeth.

"Right, of course, he did mention someone, but I take it you're all first years going to Hogwarts," replied the girl.

"No we're seventh years who were doused with a powerful shrinking potion," said Elizabeth sarcastically. "Of course, we're first years."

"Well there's really no need to be rude," said the girl in a bossy tone of voice but she got over any irritation quickly. "It is interesting though, well it was to me, I mean, my parents aren't magical it was a bit of shock getting my letter. I didn't believe it at first but after a while, it was obvious, strange things happened around me my entire

childhood. I must say I'm looking forward to Hogwarts, from what I read, it's the best magical school in the world and I'm Hermione Granger by the way."

Elizabeth wondered if she even took a breath during that entire spiel.

"Ron Weasley," said Ron.

"Harry Black," said Harry.

"Elizabeth Potter," replied Elizabeth just awaiting for the reaction that came with her name and true to form Hermione's eyes lit up.

"Really?" asked Hermione. "Of course, I've ready all about you, you're in Modern Magical History and The Rise and the Fall of the Dark Arts and Great Wizarding Events of the Twentieth Century and..."

"I might be in those books but they know nothing about me," responded Elizabeth in a tense voice, who knew exactly the type of person Granger was. She was the type that memorized books from back to front and showed off her knowledge to make others look inferior to her. They lacked any creativity. "I bet nothing in those books are remotely true, considering the fact that no one has ever talked to me that's connected to the Wizarding World up until a month ago."

"But, they have to be true, I mean, they're written in books," argued Hermione and Elizabeth rolled her eyes. "Well, they wouldn't put out any books that had lies in them..."

"No of course not Hermione, all books are written by gods who can't make mistakes," said Elizabeth. "Seriously don't believe everything you see in a book. The sooner you stop trusting everything just because it's written in a book, the better you'll be."

"Right, what house are you going to be in when you get into Hogwarts?" asked Hermione suddenly. "All of them look interesting, Gryffindor seems to be the best, because I read that Professor

Dumbledore was in there when he went to school but I suppose Ravenclaw might not be too bad..."

Harry, Elizabeth, and Ron just sat there as Hermione trailed off, before she cleared her throat.

"Right, I'm going to see if I can find Neville's toad," said Hermione as she turned and walked off.

"I hope she's not in my house, all my family has been in Gryffindor," said Ron boldly. "Your parents have been too, Elizabeth, but I suppose that Ravenclaw would not be too bad, but imagine being put in Slytherin. It would be a nightmare, I would have to get right on the train and go back..."

"What's so bad about Slytherin?" demanded Elizabeth.

"Well, that's where all the evil witches and wizards come from, You-Know-Who was in Slytherin," said Ron.

"Voldemort was in Slytherin," replied Elizabeth and Ron winced.

"You said his name, I thought you of all people would not do it," said Ron.

"It's bloody pathetic to call Voldemort, You-Know-Who, it's just a name, it's not that he's going to jump out from behind a chair and attack you if you say it," said Elizabeth and Ron once again winced at Voldemort's name. "You say you're going to be in Gryffindor, but that's supposed to be the house that values bravery above all else."

"Yes, it's the best house," said Ron.

"Yet, you can't stand someone saying Voldemort," said Harry and Ron winced once again at the sound of his name. "I won't even begin to point out how stupid you are on your limited view of Slytherin."

"Harry, sorry I'm late, it took forever to ditch Crabbe and Goyle and Pansy kept trying to follow me," said Draco as he entered the

compartment before he saw Ron Weasley sitting there. "Harry, you just have warned me there was an infestation in this compartment."

"Malfoy, what are you doing here?" demanded Ron.

"I could have asked you the same question, Weasley, it seems to be that this compartment could use a few improvements and that involves you getting out of here," drawled Draco in a bored tone of voice.

"Fine, we'll let you two dark wizards alone, I'm sure we can sit with someone else," replied Ron, as he looked towards the door but turned around when he saw Elizabeth was following. "You don't want to stick around with these two, they're going to be Slytherins..."

"You know something Weasley, maybe I'll be one in Slytherin well," replied Elizabeth. "Get this through your Neanderthal intellect mind. I will never be your friend, I will never like you and if you come near me again, I'll hex you."

"But Elizabeth, they're corrupt you just like they've corrupted my sister..." begged Ron.

"You heard her, Weasley, move it, there's a blond haired buffoon a couple of carts down that looked like he swallowed the entire snack cart, he seems to be about on your intellect level," said Draco and Ron looked about to protest, but he finally gave it up as a lost cause, before he walked off.

"That blond headed buffoon is my cousin Dudley," said Elizabeth in amusement at his assessment of her cousin and suddenly, the boy looked rather appalled.

"There is no way that thing can be related to you," said Draco in a skeptical voice.

"I tell myself that everyday," said Elizabeth. "Unfortunately my family tree has a few rotten branches on it."



“Yes, you get those even in the best families,” muttered Draco before he straightened up. “By the way, my name’s Malfoy, Draco Malfoy.”

“Elizabeth Potter,” said Elizabeth calmly and they spent the rest of the train ride just talking. Draco and Harry told her about their other two friends, Ginny and Luna, who would be starting Hogwarts the next year. Elizabeth thought she would get along with both of them based on what Draco and Harry told them, they appeared to be two young witches who had sense, which from her first impressions was a trait that many lacked in this strange new world.

Eventually the train had stopped and they got to Hogwarts where a large man with a wild black beard and hair, was taking the first years up to the school in boats. Elizabeth questioned the wisdom of taking young children, across a large lake, on rickety boats, but fortunately nothing happened when the giant man took them up to the school and then knocked on the door, allowing Professor McGonagall to take them in, to await to be sorted. Some of the students looked so nervous, one would think they were being lead to an execution instead of a sorting and moments later, they were lead into the Great Hall, where a large hat sat on a three legged stool.

“When I call your name, you will come up and sit down on this stool, where the hat will place you in any one of the houses,” remarked McGonagall before the sorting hat began to speak.

“Great it sings,” muttered Elizabeth, causing Harry to snicker as the hat broke into a song. Elizabeth subconsciously blocked it from her mind, the last thing she wanted to do was listen to a talking piece of fabric recite bad poetry but mercifully the hat finished it’s song, as Professor McGonagall began calling them up one by one. Before too long, it was Harry’s turn to walk up.

Harry sat down on the stool placing the hat over his eyes.

“Hmm, interesting, very interesting, I can see what’s in your head and you...ah, Mr. Potter, I thought this might be you, the other half to the girl that I’ve overhead so much about, the supposed deceased twin,”: stated the hat in Harry’s head. “You worry about her safety, about

what she has to face and will stand by her no matter what. That loyalty is rather commendable..."

"This is so degrading, being stereotyped at a young age," muttered Harry.

"I know, believe me, especially considering people are putting more and more stock into these placements than the Founders had ever intended, still back to the matter at hand, I must sort you, that is what I am made to do," said the hat. "As I was saying, if above all your other qualities, you are loyal to the people you care about it. That defines you, Mr. Potter and therefore there is one place where I'll put you..."

The hat paused for dramatic effect.

"HUFFLEPUFF!" shouted the hat and Harry pulled the hat off of his head, Hufflepuff was unexpected and he saw the speechless look on Draco's face.

"I know," mouthed Harry as he looked Draco's way, before shrugging, as he joined the Hufflepuff Table.

A few people later, Elizabeth watched Dudley waddle over. She awaited eagerly to see what house Dudley would be sorted in because she knew that was not the house for her. Dudley sat on the chair and put the hat over his head. The hat was over Dudley's eyes for a long time before it made its decision.

"SLYTHERIN!" shouted the sorting hat and Draco groaned.

"Hoping to get into Slytherin, I take it," said Elizabeth.

"Yes, but seems much less attractive right now," said Draco as he walked the students sitting at the Slytherin table scowl at Dudley in disgust. Not only did a Mudblood get put in Slytherin, but not a very bright one either.

Elizabeth watched Hermione Granger get sorted into Gryffindor, making it two houses that she had no desire to be sorted in.

When it was his turn, Draco walked up to the sorting hat, fixing an arrogant expression on his face, trying not to look nervous. Despite his better wishes, his father conveyed that he would be rather disappointed if Draco had ended up in anywhere but Slytherin. There was conflicts in his mind, but his desire to please his father had won out this time. As he sat on the stool and began to place the Sorting Hat over his head, he thought of nothing but all the qualities that he had that would fit someone in Slytherin.

“SLYTHERIN!” shouted the hat as soon as the hat touched Draco’s head.

Several more students were called as Elizabeth awaited anxiously, now she wanted to get this over with.

“Elizabeth Potter!” called McGonagall and Elizabeth got up to her feet.

“Elizabeth Potter,” said a voice in the distance.

“The Elizabeth Potter!” yelled another voice.

“The Girl-Who-Lived?” questioned yet another voice. “The one who beat You-Know-Who?”

“It can’t be, she looks an eight year old little girl, not like a powerful witch,” said yet another voice as Elizabeth put the sorting hat on her head.

“Quite a complex mind we have right here, I have seen very few students who were more difficult to place,” stated the hat. “Qualities of all four of the houses, loyalty but only to those that have earned it and you are willing to work hard. Some ambitious qualities as well and a great deal of bravery. Oh, a great mind as well, with the creativity that Rowena valued in he students. Your mind is perhaps the most valuable asset you have, remember that, but now where to place you? It does seem obvious, but this is not a matter to be taken lightly.”

The hat remained silent.

“Not going to be an easy choice, but looking over everything else in your mind, it looks like there is one house that stands up above all others, yes you will be on your way to greatness in one place,” said the hat before it paused. “RAVENCLAW!”

Elizabeth could see the sour looks on the face of quite a few people at the Gryffindor table but the Ravenclaw table clapped. It was a reserved clapping, not an overly boisterous clapping, but polite and welcoming. She sat down, only halfway paying attention to the rest of the sorting. Ron Weasley got sorted into Gryffindor which he obviously wanted, even though he casted longing looks towards her before joining his fellow classmates. Elizabeth wondered if there the Wizarding World had such a thing as a restraining order, she would have to look into that later on.

“Welcome to another year at Hogwarts,” said Dumbledore with a twinkle in his eye, a trick that Elizabeth felt she absolutely had to learn. “For you new students, I am Professor Dumbledore, the Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. I’m sure you are all hungry and let’s not waste any time.”

Several dishes full of food appeared on the table and Elizabeth jumped on the opportunity to pile up her plate. At the Dursleys she was only given enough to survive, so she would most certainly make up for lost time when she was at Hogwarts.

“Hungry, much?” asked a brown haired girl with a smile. “No offense, but I don’t blame you, it looks like you could use a few meals.”

“Believe me, I know,” said Elizabeth, as she began to pile up her plate with more food than she ate in a month at the Dursleys. “I’m sick of people saying that I look like an eight year old.”

“I heard them muttering about that, by the way they were carrying on, they were expecting some glamorous model or something like that,” said the girl. “Lisa Turpin by the way, but I must say it’s a shock to see you in Ravenclaw. Everyone thought you’d be in Gryffindor but that just proves how little we know about the real Elizabeth Potter.”

“At least you have a good head on your shoulders, Lisa, to understand there’s a difference between me and that fictional figure they write about in the books,” said Elizabeth. “Harry and Draco are the only other people that I’ve met so far that seem to understand there’s a difference.”

“Draco as in Draco Malfoy?” asked Lisa in a curious voice.

“Yes, I don’t know many other people who would be named Draco,” said Elizabeth. “What about him?”

“It’s just he seemed to be a bit anti-social to me when I was at his birthday party, of course, it didn’t seem like much of a party, it’s just my father and Draco’s father are both on the Board of Governors, so Dad insisted that I attend,” said Lisa. “The entire party, he blew everyone off, of course, I never really got close enough, Parkinson didn’t really let any other girl get close to Draco. She’s obsessed with him or maybe his money, it’s hard to say.”

“That wouldn’t be her, would it?” asked Elizabeth as she saw a pug faced girl talking to another girl or at least what Elizabeth thought was a girl, it was hard to tell.

“Yep, that’s her,” said Lisa as she went to her food and the more that Elizabeth watched Pansy Parkinson, the more she was reminded of the girls in school that tormented her because of her clothes. Snooty, superior, and quite frankly always putting down others to make themselves look better.

“I figured as much,” replied Elizabeth as she continued to eat. It was a welcomed change to have as much as she could. Dinner was replaced by dessert, an art that Elizabeth never was allowed to indulge in. Needless to say, she made up for lost time in a hurry.

After dinner, Dumbledore stood up with a broad smile.

“I now have a few before term announcements now that you are all fed and watered,” said Dumbledore calmly. “The Forbidden Forest, as its name indicates, is strictly forbidden. First years are discouraged

from going anywhere near that and I feel it is prudent to remind a few of our older students that they should not venture towards it.”

Dumbledore’s eyes snapped towards a certain pair of twins, who took a short bow at their trouble making antics.

“Mr. Filch has also told me to remind you that magic is forbidden in the corridors and also there is a list of items that are banned from Hogwarts on the door of his office that you can all view at your leisure,” said Dumbledore. “In addition, Quidditch trials will be held within the next couple of weeks. Anyone who wishes to have a place on their house team, please contact Madam Hooch.”

Dumbledore looked around, before he proceeded to make his final announcement.

“Now, there has been a staff change in the post of the Defense Against the Dark Arts once more,” said Dumbledore. “I am pleased to announce that this post will be filled for this year by retired Hit Wizard, Professor Jack Savannah.”

Savannah stood, giving the school a good look at him. He had a completely serious expression etched on his face, with an eye patch over his right eye and scars all over his arms in what was visible underneath his robes. He looked like a person that could injured someone with his bare hands, even without his wand.

Harry looked at Savannah from the Hufflepuff table, frowning in deep concentration. His name sounded very familiar, he had heard it somewhere beyond him being an old hit wizard. Yet, nothing was coming to mind, but he was famous for another reason. The mutterings around him had clued Harry in that he was not the only one that had heard of Savannah before.

“Now I’m sure tomorrow will be a busy day, so it’s essential we all get a good night’s rest,” said Dumbledore. “Prefects, you may lead the first year students to the dormitories, the rest of you know what to do. Good night and I hope that your year at Hogwarts is an enjoyable one.”

Elizabeth stood up, yawning. It had been a long day and it was getting late into the night. She turned to talk to Harry but she was being called by a prefect. Harry just mouthed that he would talk to her tomorrow before waving at her. She waved back, before she followed the prefect along with the other first year Ravenclaws. Tomorrow her magical education would officially begin.

## Chapter Four: Education Begins:

The night had passed quickly and it was time for the first day of classes. Elizabeth looked forward, as she scanned her schedule, sitting at the Ravenclaw table, as she looked at it.

“Defense Against the Dark Arts to start off the day,” said Elizabeth as she looked at the table.

“I wonder if how long this teacher lasts,” replied Lisa with a yawn. “My brother just left Hogwarts a couple of years ago and he said he got a new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher every year, some of them leaving abruptly, in mysterious ways.”

“Yes, and Savannah wasn’t supposed to be the teacher this year anyway, there was another one named Quirrel, but he got himself killed, attempting to steal an important item from Nicholas Flamel,” said another first year, Padma Patil. “They say it’s cursed and maybe it is, but it’s just difficult to believe.”

“Padma, all those teachers leaving, not lasting a year, it does point towards a curse on the position,” said Lisa but Padma just shrugged her shoulders.

“It’s difficult, but not impossible, but it would take a very powerful witch or wizard to curse something like a teaching position,” said Padma shrugging her shoulders. “Maybe like Dumbledore or You-Know-Who...”

“If it’s cursed, why doesn’t Dumbledore get rid of the class and bring it back under a different name, that way it’s not cursed anymore,” said Elizabeth. “Or does that make too much sense.”

“Actually that is kind of brilliant,” said Lisa. “I’m not sure if anyone would go for it though. All class additions or cancellations have to go through the Board of Governors and I can’t see them agreeing to do something like that. If I remember rightly, something like that has to be voted unanimously. I’d have to ask Dad, but I’m pretty sure that’s the case.”



“Yes, even if it does make sense, it might never happen, maybe someone should suggest it to Dumbledore,” said Padma. “He might be able to make a case for the Board of Governors.”

“I don’t think Dumbledore would entertain a suggestion from a first year,” said Elizabeth.

“He might from you,” said Lisa calmly and Elizabeth just shrugged, before she ate a few more last bites of her breakfast. She had eaten more in the past two meals than she had in ten years of the Dursleys.

“We better get to class, we don’t want to be late, Savannah might tear off our heads and mount them on the wall by the looks of him,” said Elizabeth, as she got up, with Lisa and Padma following her up the stairs. The rest of the first year Ravensclaws also joined the group sometime after, making their way to the Defense Against the Dark Arts classroom.

The bell rang and Savannah arrived at the class room, looking at the books that some members of the class had taken out through a narrowed eye.

“Put those useless things away,” grunted Savannah in a rough voice, and they hastened to obey. “Now this is Defense Against the Dark Arts class, perhaps the most useful class you will take at this school. I am your teacher, Professor Savannah. For fifty years, I was a hit wizard for the Ministry of Magic. Even better than some Aurors or so it was said. Yet, I left the Ministry shortly after, because they refused to acknowledge a serious threat to the Wizarding World. No doubt some of you have read by my exploits as a vampire hunter and I can tell you that they are true. While the Ministry refuses to employ vampire hunters, there are a small number of us who work beyond the Ministry and pay fines each year or get sent to Azkaban surrounded by the trash that the Ministry has helped create due to their weakness. They’d rather focus on werewolves, who are only monsters a handful of times a year, instead of vampires, who are monsters the second they accept the curse immortality for the rest of their existence.”

Savannah paused, he thought little about the Ministry from the tone of his voice.

“Enough about me, you are here to learn Defense Against the Dark Arts,” said Savannah. “To defend yourself against dangerous wizards and dangerous creatures, books will only get you to a certain point. The two most important tools will be your wits and your wands and in some cases, you may be deprived of your wand, so your wits are the only thing that can be used and that’s where many great wizards have failed, relying too much on their wands. This works two ways, if you find some way to take the wand away from an opponent, it is likely you may gain a huge advantage against them.”

Savannah stood in the classroom, looking at the students, having their full and undivided attention.

“You walk into my classroom as defenseless children and if you aren’t weak and soft, you will walk out seven years great duelists, able to defend yourself if someone decides to attack you,” said Savannah. “Some of you will collapse, others will thrive and survive. I fully intend to weed out the weak by the time we get to your Ordinary Wizarding Level exams. Now the Ministry of Magic and Dumbledore forbids me from actually teaching you the dark arts, beyond mentioning what defensive spells can be useful for what dark arts, which is a shame. Without fully understanding the dark arts, you are stuck with the already invented defenses, that are known, and unable to adapt in the battle.”

Savannah scowled at this thought.

“But back to the wand thing, take away the wand and you weaken most opponents,” lectured Savannah. “The disarming spell is a common way to do this. The incantation is Expelliarmus. Visualize ripping the wand from the grasp of your opponent and if cast correctly, your opponent will be blasted away from you. It will stop them from grabbing your wand. Now pair up and practice this spell.”

The Ravenclaws hastened to pair up, as Savannah watched over them. Several cries of “Expelliarmus” echoed throughout the room but little headway was being made. Desks were overturned, chairs were

overturned, and all kinds of mayhem, with very little of the way of the students being disarmed.

Elizabeth, who was practicing with Padma, was slightly frustrated at first, but her glee rose once she began to get closer to disarming Padma with each passing time. On the sixth try, she managed to knock Padma backwards, causing the wand to fly out of her hand and land on the desk. Quickly, Elizabeth stepped forward, to bend over to check on her.

“Are you okay?” asked Elizabeth.

“Fine,” said Padma wincing as she pulled herself up. “Just a little sore, I wasn’t expecting to get hit that hard, I mean it was just a disarming charm.”

“Sorry, I wasn’t trying to hit you that hard, although if I ever use that spell on someone I hate, I will,” said Elizabeth with a smile as she handed Padma’s wand back to its owner. “Ready to try that on me.”

“Expelliarmus!” shouted Padma as the spell flew towards Elizabeth but while the wand lifted from Elizabeth’s hand just a fraction of a centimeter.

“You blocked it!” shouted Terry Boot, who was practicing with Lisa, causing both of them to stop, to turn to Elizabeth, mouths wide open and several other Ravenclaws had also seemed to stop what they were doing to

“I did?” asked Elizabeth in surprise before turning to Padma. “Try that again, I want to see something. Don’t hold anything back.”

“I didn’t last time,” muttered Padma, before she raised her wand, before concentrating, visualizing the wand being taken away from Elizabeth. “EXPELLIARMUS!”

Elizabeth felt a small jerk and instinctively, she had the intention in her mind not to lose her wand. Sure enough the wand remained in the tips of her fingers.

“So what, we’re just learning that spell, if an adult wizard attacked me right now, I bet they wouldn’t have any trouble disarming me,” replied Elizabeth with a dismissive shrug. “I don’t even know what I’m doing.”

“Well, you must be doing something right,” said Lisa with a frown, thinking that her friend was selling herself rather short, as she went back to practicing the spell. Padma had tried to disarm Elizabeth several more times before the period was over and while she had come close on one occasion, towards the end, the wand did not even budge from Elizabeth’s hand.

“The class is about over, everyone back to your seats!” barked Savannah and promptly, the Ravenclaws made their way back to their seats. “Now that your first lesson is concluded, I will say that a few of you show some small potential. Others have a lot of work to do. For homework, practice the spell and if you must, read up on the theory of the disarming charm, but use it only as a reference, not a strict guide of what you should. If you ever find yourselves in a situation where your life is in danger, you will not get a chance to look up a counter spell in a book. Remember, you wits and your wand. Class dismissed!”

The first year Ravenclaws left the class, with Savannah sinking into the desk, with an emotionless expression on his face. Elizabeth busily thought about the disarming spell, at the very least, she had found a way to block it, but she needed to look at this closely, to do it consciously. Something told her it would come in handy and maybe could work for other spells as well.

The first week of classes went by rather briskly after that class. Transfiguration came right after Defense Against the Dark Arts. Professor McGonagall was a fair teacher, she made sure that all of her students got the help they needed, but also impressed on them that her class was one that they should take seriously. Anyone who was caught messing around, would be forced to leave and never return. Elizabeth doubted that they could be kicked out of one of the core classes of Hogwarts forever, but McGonagall’s expression like this was such that she doubted that very few would think of this. There was a lot of complex theory that made her head spin and when she tried to apply them to the matchstick she was trying to transfigure,

she failed spectacularly. It was only until she tried to not focus on all the technical parts of the theory and rather visualize the matchstick changing into a needle, that she managed to make progress. She had come closest to making a change on the needle, with all of the Ravenclaws making some degree of process. As she found out, Hermione Granger was the only one who managed to do so, but Elizabeth was confident that she would have figured out the transfiguration sooner had she not been tripped up by the mind numbing theory.

Charms was much of the same, Elizabeth felt she could do really well in the subject, having looked over her textbook and began practicing some of the charms during her free time at the Common Room. She could already levitate, which was not to be taught for several weeks along with a few other charms. Right now, they were learning more magical theory, which was rather a necessary but frustrating part of her education. While Professor Flitwick said that the theory would be important later, it was still something that she did not focus on.

She liked Herbology much better than she expected. She thought she would hate it, mostly because she despised gardening when Petunia forced her to do it at home. Still, learning the magical properties of several plants intrigued her, as it got her thinking how they could be used in potion brewing, another subject that she had taken a time to read ahead. Still, it was far from her favorite class, but there were worse classes, like History of Magic. In the hands of a better, more interesting teacher, Elizabeth felt she would have loved this class. History was one of her favorite classes when she went to Muggle school after all. Yet it was taught by the most boring, mind numbing person imaginable and he was a ghost. He had been teaching the class for a long time, both alive and as a ghost, even before Dumbledore had even attended Hogwarts. Binns droned on and on for what seemed like days, but was really on an hour, in the most boring manner possible. She tried to stay away, but after about five minutes, Elizabeth gave up, after many others had and resolved to check out the library for any interesting books on history.

Thursday afternoon was a double period of Potions with the Hufflepuffs and other than another Herbology class on Friday, this was the final class of the week.

“Hi Elizabeth, how was your first week?” asked Harry as he arrived at the class, sitting down at the table with Elizabeth, with Lisa and Padma taking the table right on the other side of them. They had seen each other in the hallways, exchanged a few words, but the hectic schedule of Hogwarts, especially for the first week in the first year, had made it very difficult for those from different houses to socialize during the week. Harry, while he socialized with most of his year mates in Hufflepuff, kept to himself for the most part and had only talked to Draco briefly on a few occasions, while sending letters back and forth with both Luna and Ginny. Still Harry was glad that his sister had made friends inside her house, since he could not watch over her.

“It’s been brilliant Harry,” said Elizabeth. “Well except for History of Magic, that was just an excuse to catch up on my sleep but other than that, pretty good. It’s been the best week of my life, well at least since my parents died, but I can’t really remember any of them.”

Harry wanted to say something, but he decided not to, it might look suspicious. A part of him wanted to tell Elizabeth the truth about them being twins straight away, but he doubted very much that she would believe it this soon. She was relatively smart and would not expect something at face value without truth. Harry thought it would be easy to figure out how to break the news to her.

At that more, Snape entered the classroom, robes billowing behind him, as he walked into the classroom and began to take roll.

“Ah, Elizabeth Potter, our resident heroine,” said Snape coldly as he looked at Elizabeth through his cold black eyes. She was stunned, wondering what she could have ever done to Snape, she had hardly met the man. Snape continued the roll call, before he fixed his cold, indifferent expression on the rest of the class. “Now for those of you who think waving a wand and saying a few words is all that magic is, you are in for a disappointment. You will be destined to fail in my class. The subtle and complex art of Potion brewing is not one that any dunderhead can master but at the same time, I expect that you all put out an effort to learn once you are under my instruction or I will be very displeased.”

Snape looked around calmly, letting every word sink in. He absolutely despised teaching children who did not have any potential on the art of Potion making, but Dumbledore had once again denied him the chance to teach Defense Against the Dark Arts.

“Potter!” snapped Snape, causing Elizabeth to turn her full attention to Snape. “What do I get if I added a powdered root of an asphodel to an infusion of wormwood.”

“Draught of the Living Dead, a very powerful sleeping potion, that can knock out a person from up to a hundred years depending on the dosage, Professor,” said Elizabeth without missing a beat, she remembered seeing the potion in one of the books she purchased in Diagon Alley and Snape had a sour look on his face, before shaking his head.

“Well then where would you find a bezoar?” demanded Snape.

“In the stomach of the goat, it will save you from all but seventeen poisons, all of which that are listed in the Two Hundredth and twenty fourth addition of the Almanac of Potion making,” said Elizabeth smugly, Snape obviously wanted to make her look like an idiot, but that tended to backfire on people more often than not.

Snape took a breath, so the girl had read up, that mattered little, many had and were useless at the practical end of Potions.

“Very well, Miss Potter, one final question, what is the main ingredient for the Polyjuice Potion?” asked Snape, knowing full well that the potion was not listed in the first year textbook.

“A bit of the person you are turning into, it’s recommended that you use their hair, but toenails or blood works just as well, Professor,” said Elizabeth quickly with a frown. “Of course, I’m pretty sure that’s not a first year potion, but it’s a good thing I thought to read a bit ahead.

“Five points from Ravenclaw for flaunting your knowledge to make your peers look bad and five points for questioning a teacher, Miss

Potter, I will not tolerate such behavior in my classroom” said Snape foully and Lisa and Padma looked absolutely enraged at Snape, while the other Ravenclaws were casting Elizabeth dirty looks, at losing them ten points. The Hufflepuffs seemed rather indifferent, except for Harry who seemed to be biting his tongue to prevent himself from lashing out from Snape. “Now you will complete a potion that will cure boils. It is one of the most elementary potions. I expect it to be done correctly. The instructions and ingredients are on the blackboard, the store cupboards or your personal supplies will have everything you need to adequately complete this potion. Begin now.”

With that the class went to work on their potions. Elizabeth studied the recipe intently, from what she knew about Potions, it would achieve a desirable result, but she felt it could be improved on. A few modifications, an extra stir here and there, an extra few degrees to heat the potion, and an added porcupine quill had enhanced the potion’s quality. The finished project was said to be a white color, but some of the other potions were mostly grey. Harry’s potion was the only one who was closest to being white and depending on where a person stood, either one could have looked better.

“Miss Potter that was most acceptable, you may not be as hopeless as I had thought, but do keep up that quality of work and improve on it,” said Snape as he looked at the potion. He was a bit impressed, if truth be told, it was nearly the quality that he had managed the first time he had completed this potion. If the girl had added a drop of newt’s blood, it would have been a perfect potion. Snape moved on to the others. “Goldstein that potion is an atrocity, it is an insult to the art of Potions. I would think that you would have known how to properly read instructions.”

Snape turned to the class, with his usual cold indifferent look.

“A sample of your potions will be placed on the box on my desk. For homework, you will write a short essay determining where you have went wrong and how you might have improved on the quality of your performance today,” said Snape as he watched the class clean up and take the samples to the desk one by one. “I expect only the very best, so I highly suggest some of you take a more proactive approach towards learning this art. Class dismissed.”



Elizabeth walked out, with Lisa and Padma following her from the classroom, exchanging looks.

"Don't take this personal, but Snape hates everyone," said Lisa in a quiet voice. "He always asks questions to one person, to make himself look superior. I wouldn't worry about it too much. He seemed to back up when he saw how good your potion was."

"I don't know how you got it that good, but yeah, Black's might have been just as good though," added Padma. "Exactly what is the deal between you and him, you seem to be the one he freely talks to, well you and Malfoy. Don't get me wrong, he's nice enough, but he doesn't seem to be too talkative"

"We met in Diagon Alley, he was the first friend I've ever had, at least the only one that Dudley hasn't been able to scare away, in fact, I think Harry intimidated Dudley," replied Elizabeth with a smile at the memory.

"I still can't believe you're related to him, Liz," said Lisa with a shudder. She had encountered

Dudley went returning from the library one day and he rudely told her to get out of his way. She never wanted to hex someone so badly in her life.

"Believe me that makes two of us," said Elizabeth.

"I can't believe you didn't say something to your aunt and uncle if your cousin bullied everyone that tried to be your friend," said Padma.

"Are you kidding, they would have bought Dudley a new computer, they would have been proud their precious little, perfect boy put the little freak in her place," remarked Elizabeth in an amused tone of voice. "Of course, I couldn't expect anything else from the wonderful guardians who threw their own niece in her cupboard when she got blood all over the carpet, when their son threw her down the stairs and nearly cracked her skull open."

Elizabeth just shook her head to clear these memories of her childhood. Lisa and Padma both looked very uncomfortable.

“So now, how about we head back to the Common Room and get a start on that Potions Essay before dinnertime,” said Elizabeth as if what she said was a common household occurrence. Both of her friends followed, wondering if abuse and neglect was not harshly punished in the Muggle World, as it was in the Wizarding World. It was widely known that if a witch or wizard was convicted of abuse of a minor, they could be sentenced to life in Azkaban.

In the distance, Harry had overheard the conversation. He would speak to Dumbledore about this, his sister was being put in harm's way because of some kind of game that the old man was playing.

Harry found himself in the Headmaster's office several weeks after Hogwarts began. It took him this long to get an appointment, because he wanted to speak to him about Elizabeth. Finally, Dumbledore would give him the time a day. Harry hoped that Dumbledore would at least take his concerns under account.

“Ah Harry, do come in and have a seat,” said Dumbledore with a twinkle in his eyes.

“Headmaster,” said Harry with a nod as Dumbledore turned to acknowledge him.

“So tell me, how has school been going?” asked Dumbledore in a kind voice.

“Hogwarts has been fine,” said Harry shortly. “Headmaster, I want to speak to you on a very sensitive subject. As you know I have befriended my sister.”

“Yes, Harry and that was quite the noble thing you did, reaching out to her, even though you cannot reveal that you are her twin, it helped her be comfortable and make other friends,” said Dumbledore with an approving nod.

“And I’ve found out some things about her home life,” said Harry in a calm voice and Dumbledore became gravely serious. “Professor Dumbledore, Mum has told me that you have assured the Ministry time and time again that the Dursleys have done nothing to harm her.”

“Correct Harry, Elizabeth is perfectly safe at the home of her aunt and uncle, as I have told Andromeda every time she has written me” said Dumbledore. “Professor McGonagall brought a couple of concerns to my attention but I have looked in the matter and corrected it. I do realize that she had far from adequate clothing, but Petunia has assured me that was due to them having to cut certain corners, and considering she replaced them anyway the moment she was taken to her vault, I see no concern and no harm down.”

“The thing is, I do,” replied Harry and Dumbledore looked at Harry. “She’s mentioned incidents before, like her cousin throwing her down the stairs and her getting punished by getting blood on the carpet, also being forced to do chores in the heat of the day without any water, while Dudley lounged around and did nothing. Elizabeth talks about these things so casually, well it scares me and to an extent, I fear that if she spends anymore time at the Dursleys, she’ll be warped to the point of mental instability.”

“Harry, I feel you are greatly overstating the situation, your sister seems to be a well adjusted child from what I’ve seen, a little headstrong, a bit willing to speak her mind, and unwilling to get stepped over, but it’s perfectly normal,” said Dumbledore. “The cupboard matter has been solved, I talked to Petunia and Elizabeth has been moved to a normal bedroom...”

“You mean they forced her to live in a cupboard when they had another bedroom on hand,” said Harry in an incredulous voice and Dumbledore just remained silent. “Headmaster, I respect your abilities as a wizard, but I fear I’m losing your respect as a human being.”

“You are entitled to your own opinion Harry, as hurtful as it may be to me,” said Dumbledore. “But once again, if Elizabeth was in any real danger, she would have been pulled from the Dursleys in an instant. I

would be forced to seek alternative options but as difficult as it may be due to their differences, Elizabeth will have to remain at the Dursleys."

"Why?" inquired Harry and Dumbledore stared at him, thinking the best way to answer this inquiry, without revealing the blood protections.

"For her own safety, Harry, there is no other way," said Dumbledore, sighing, seeing that Harry would not be appeased with that answer for long. "I appreciate and even admire your concern for your sister's well being, but she'll be perfectly safe at the Dursleys and will only have to spend the summer there, so she will only see a minimum of them until she becomes of age."

"For now, Headmaster, I will take your word, but if you are wrong, it doesn't matter what I will do, but rather what the rest of the Wizarding World will do to you because of your mistake," said Harry.

"If it is I am mistaken, than I will bear the consequences, Harry," said Dumbledore in a resigned voice. "But I feel everything will work itself as it is meant to be in the end."

"Good night Headmaster," said Harry, knowing that that there was an uphill battle to get Elizabeth away from the Dursleys, Dumbledore held many prominent positions in the Wizarding World and if he thought he was doing something for the best, than most of everyone went along with him. It was that sheep mentality that was plaguing the majority of the Wizarding World. Still, Harry refused to give up, his sister could not be left with these people. He worried what would become of her, it was a miracle she could even perform magic.

Hermione Granger was rather frustrated at the moment. Since she could remember, she had always been in the top of her class at school, it made up for her inability to make friends. At Hogwarts, she was still at the top, except for two classes. In Defense Against the Dark Arts, Harry Black had surpassed her grades and in Potions, Elizabeth Potter had higher marks than her. Another class, Transfiguration, she was barely in front of the pack and in other classes, she could ill afford to slip up. In fact, it depressed her to think

that the only class she was absolutely the top of her class in was History of Magic.

“Elizabeth!” called Hermione, as she saw the first year Ravenclaw walking down the corridor. It was time for her to find out exactly what Elizabeth Potter was doing different in Potions to get a better grade than her.

Elizabeth turned slightly, she was thinking about the last month at Hogwarts, how it had been wonderful, with the exception of Ron Weasley attempting his ill fated attempts to befriend her. Even Dudley had not been as much of a problem, although she did hear rumors that her oafish cousin found himself in the hospital wing. Given the rumors of the opinion of most Slytherins towards muggleborn witches and wizards, things could have been much worse for Dudley, not that Elizabeth shed many tears for him. He was just getting put through the same treatment his gang had put every other kid who disagreed with them through. Still, she enjoyed the classes for the most part and enjoyed having friends for once in her life, so overall, Hogwarts was a positive experience.

“Elizabeth!” shouted Hermione a second time and Elizabeth turned, she had better see what the bookworm had wanted.

“Yes, Granger, what do you want?” asked Elizabeth in a polite tone of voice.

“I noticed that you were doing well in Potions and I was wondering if you could help me,” said Hermione calmly and Elizabeth surveyed her suspiciously.

“What potion do you not understand?” asked Elizabeth and Hermione took a deep breath.

“No, but I was wondering if you could recommend me a book that might help me figure out what you were doing differently, I just want to improve,” stated Hermione and Elizabeth just began laughing, causing Hermione to look quite affronted. “Honestly, what’s so funny about asking about a book?”

“For your informative, I’ve read the textbooks and mostly followed the recipes, making logical improvements when needed, obviously there is no scientific method to doing it and nothing that can be simply learned strictly from a book,” said Elizabeth and Hermione’s eyes widened in terror.

“You were experimenting with potions, adding to the already approved recipes, don’t you realize how dangerous that is?” demanded Hermione. “You could get someone killed...”

“Listen, Granger, Professor Snape would have told me if he did not approve of my experimenting with the potions by now, he is quite vocal any other time he finds a fault with someone,” said Elizabeth with a sigh. “The recipes are guaranteed to get you a passing grade and a working potion, but they can be improved on. The book isn’t always right you know.”

“But you can’t just randomly add ingredients to a potion, it isn’t safe,” argued Hermione stubbornly.

“If you look at it, what I am doing is enhancing certain properties within the already established parameters of a potion, I’m not dumping ingredients in for any rhyme or reason,” said Elizabeth. “I can see why you were sorted into Gryffindor instead of Ravenclaw.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” asked Hermione.

“You couldn’t create anything if your life depended on it, if it isn’t what the book told you to do,” said Elizabeth. “If you have a problem with what I’m doing, please feel free to take up your concerns to Professor Snape. That is if you think you know better than him. I’ll be sure to bring flowers to your funeral”

Hermione stormed off, as Elizabeth watched her leave. It was quite a shame, Hermione did have some potential, but only if she could think outside the box and beyond what the books told her.

“That Mudblood’s being an annoyance, again, I take it,” said a voice and Elizabeth turned around, to see Draco leaning against the wall,

with a smirk on his face. "She seems to think she knows everything just because she read something in a book."

"Pretty much yeah," said Elizabeth. "Draco, I've heard the word Mudblood used a lot, especially towards Slytherins, but others, mostly directed towards my cousin and I couldn't find what it meant."

"Well, originally it was a word invented to describe muggleborn witches and wizards who think they know everything about our world, because they've read a few books, people like Granger in other words but it's now just used to describe any muggleborn, mocking them for having dirty blood, because their blood line is soiled because of their muggle relatives," said Draco lightly. "Of course your cousin does fall under this category in a way, even though he looks like it would pain him to pick up a book. He still acts like he's superior, calling us freaks, you'd think he'd learn after a few visits to the hospital wing, but he does serve one purpose."

"What's that?" asked Elizabeth in confusion, she thought of her cousin as useless and was hard pressed to think of any purpose he could serve.

"Well he's done wonders for raising Crabbe and Goyle's self esteem, he makes them seem smart," replied Draco and Elizabeth snickered behind her hand. "Don't know exactly how he got sorted into Slytherin, definitely one of the Sorting Hat's more questionable decisions."

"Well to be fair, Dudley isn't smart, brave, or hard working, so the hat must have decided that Slytherin would be the best fit, even if it doesn't really fit, which does kind of show a problem with the sorting," said Elizabeth. "Shoe horned people into four different categories is the problem, it's just asking for trouble."

"You sound exactly like Harry," replied Draco with a slight shake of his head. "As I told him, the house system has been in place ever since the founders founded Hogwarts. I doubt it's going to change any time soon," said Draco, before he looked around. "Pansy is no doubt wondering where I went, I gave her and her gang of airheaded bints the slip, I'd best get back."

“Yeah, wouldn’t want her to think we were having a torrid affair or something,” said Elizabeth jokingly and Draco smirked.

“No, despite the fact we’re a couple of years away from thinking about anything like that, she seems to get jealous when I even look in the direction of another girl,” stated Draco more to himself than Elizabeth, but he saw the approaching form of Pansy. “Good bye, Potter, see you in the corridors.”

“Yeah, I will, Malfoy,” said Elizabeth, as Draco made a hasty retreat. Elizabeth turned to return to the Ravenclaw dormitory, Padma and Lisa were waiting for her and she said she would not be long, as she was only returning a book. Plus, she did not relish meeting Pansy Parkinson, her eardrums could not handle the abuse.

Jack Savannah found himself currently in the Headmaster’s office, arm bandaged up, with Snape and Dumbledore looking at him. He had left Hogwarts when word reached him of a group of vampires terrorizing the people of a village that was within walking distance of Hogsmeade. As it turned out, it had been vampires and several members of the village had been drained of blood, left severely weakened from the loss and many had perished. It was by pure luck that they managed to catch one.

Dumbledore sighed. It was tiring that he had to deal with petulant children on a regular basis and then after he returned from the Wizengamot, there were his Headmaster duties at Hogwarts to attend to. He looked at his Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher with a disapproving glance, he had never expected him to go out this soon to indulge his vampire hunting obsession. Especially considering he lost his eye the last time during his battle with the vampire queen five years ago and had claimed he retired from his activities all together.

“Jack, I am rather disappointed with you,” said Dumbledore calmly as he looked at the Defense Against the Dark Arts Teacher, former hit wizard, and part time vampire hunter, with a disapproving glare.

“It was necessary, Dumbledore,” grumbled Savannah in a defensive tone of voice. “The vampires are close to Hogsmeade, they could



very well breach the security around the school. Don't think for one second they won't try if they think they can get away with it."

"Savannah, vampires cannot thrive in this environment for all that long," said Snape coolly. "A few isolated incidents and you think there is a problem."

"Severus the problem is there is very much of a problem, but I am confident that Hogwarts will hold itself under any invasion whether it be living or the living dead and the students inside these walls will remain safe," said Dumbledore briskly, with a twinkle in his eye. "Sunlight and warmth tends to be an obstacle, we just tighten security measures around the winter months and naturally, Professor Savannah is here as an added security measure due to his experience with dealing with these creatures."

"You talk about them as if they are Grindylows, Dumbledore," said Savannah in disgust. "Those blood sucking demons will enslave all of humanity if they could find a way to bypass all of the limitations you mentioned. I may not be enough to deal with them if they find a way to get inside the school. All this fresh, young blood is a temptation for them, especially if Eskara is leading them."

"Yes the mystical vampire queen," said Snape snidely. "A fairy tale, the Dark Lord had investigated the matter and found no vampire queen. They are spread out, no vampire has a loyalty to another vampire. There are no packs like werewolves, it's not organized or anything."

"My eye was ripped out, several of my best men were slaughtered by her," said Savannah. "If she saw something to be gained by aligning herself with He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named, she would have made herself known to him. It's some sick game to her, making the world think that her followers are fragmented, but she is just ready to bring them together. You know who she once was and you do realize who is in danger if she is active once again."

"Both of you raise valid points and I have heard the rumors of who Eskara was before she was granted the curse of immortality," said

Dumbledore. "Which in a roundabout way brings us to another point, that being Elizabeth Potter."

Snape groaned, he would have liked to go one meeting without the topic of the Girl-Who-Lived being brought up.

"What about her this time, Dumbledore?" asked Snape in a tense tone of voice.

"I wished to ask your opinions on her, it seems like she's adjusted well to life at Hogwarts from what I've seen, but I would like a couple more perspectives," said Dumbledore.

"The girl seems to be willing to learn and adapt, which is more than I can say for some of the other students," said Savannah gruffly. "Her spell work is a bit unorthodox but not necessarily a bad thing. If anything else, she looked at magic in a different way than most do or want to, not willing to conform to the status quo of what is generally taught and accepted."

"Potter's ability to brew potions is much more advanced than I suspected, it seems like she takes after her mother than her father in this area of her education, I've noticed she looks for ways to enhance the recipes I assign and improve their quality," said Snape. "Parts of her attitude I don't care much for, but it would be foolish of me to deny her abilities."

Dumbledore just sat, he was reminded of another student sometime ago, who thought outside the box beyond what was established in the education. Quite frankly many had tried to reinvent the wheel so to speak, Dumbledore would be deluding himself by denying that he did not experiment from time to time. But those individuals had waited a few years into their Hogwarts education before stepping outside to try new things. A young man by the name of Tom Marvolo Riddle all those years ago wasted little time in being inventive in many magical fields and Dumbledore knew how that turned out. Not that he thought he should discourage Elizabeth, a young mind was something that should be allowed to grow and expand. Still remembering the Prophecy and what he had found out when he had did the scanning

spells to determine which child had been marked by Voldemort, Elizabeth's ambitious nature could turn out to be a benefit or a danger.

"Thank you for that information, it was very enlightening," said Dumbledore. "It was late, I think it would be best if we retire for the evening."

Savannah and Snape left, as Dumbledore went to his bed chambers. He tried to not focus on the parallels between the Girl-Who-Lived and Voldemort but lingering doubts, including Harry's own warnings had caused Dumbledore's descent into sleep to be a rocky road. Still as he slept, Dumbledore was adamant that his decision of Elizabeth's living arrangements was the correct one.

Halloween had arrived, which was a day of great celebration for most of the Wizarding World. It was the anniversary of the fall of Lord Voldemort. Ten years ago on this day, Elizabeth Potter had vanquished Voldemort and had broken the curtain of terror that descended all over Wizarding Britain. It was a jovial day, the employees of the Ministry of Magic got to leave their work earlier and Hogwarts had a grand feast on this day. To the majority Wizarding World, at least in Britain, Halloween was the happiest day of the year and worthy of celebration.

Elizabeth Potter absolutely despised Halloween. It might have meant the defeat of Voldemort to most but to her it meant the beginning of her residence at the Dursleys. When her parents got killed, she was shoved in Number Four Privet Drive. Some gratitude the Wizarding World showed their proclaimed savior. Her friends had at least sensed her mood and understood why she was a bit distant today. Other members of the school seemed to want to thank her for beating Voldemort, something that she did not remember. Not one of those people who Elizabeth had never met in her life had talked about her parents, it was like their deaths did not matter. And if they did not die, she would have not had the displeasure of dealing with the Dursleys. Of course, she wished her parents would have placed her somewhere else. There were times where jail might have been better than living with the Dursleys. At least she might get more to eat, no matter how subpar the food was.

Currently, she was sitting outside the Great Hall, while the feast was going on around her. Perhaps she should be happy that Voldemort was gone and the role she played in it, but something told her that he might still be out there. So she was not feeling festive or hungry. She told Lisa and Padma that she would be heading upstairs to go to sleep early and left. In truth, she was not really tired either and she decided to sit out in the Great Hall for a few minutes to determine where she would go next.

She looked up and saw another figure moving in the distance. Tensing up, Elizabeth prepared to make her way quickly upstairs, the last thing she wanted was to run into the Hogwarts Caretaker, the surly Mr. Filch or that troublesome poltergeist Peeves, who had thrown water balloons at Elizabeth and her friends when they were coming down for Breakfast.

Leaning forward, Elizabeth recognized who was coming immediately.

“Harry!” called Elizabeth and Harry turned around, to see her sitting there, waving him over. Harry walked over.

“Oh, hey Lizzie,” said Harry in an absent minded voice, as he walked over, considering this was an anniversary of the death of his biological parents, he was a bit out of it.

“So what are you doing out here?” asked Elizabeth in a curious voice.

“I could ask the same for you but I think I have a pretty good idea,” said Harry and Elizabeth nodded, she could almost feel that Harry had figured out what she was talking about. “Ten years already, time goes by fast, but the world could care less what really matters, as long as they have their heroes they can triumph. They forget who falls, only remembering the successes.”

“I agree Harry, so what if I defeated Voldemort, I lost my parents,” said Elizabeth quietly. “I had gotten over losing them a long time ago, I mean, they’re not coming back but now everywhere I look today, it just brings everything all back. You think people would show a little tact.”

"They get caught up in the fame and the fall of Voldemort, to give a damn about the people who made the true sacrifices, I think the world and most certainly your life, would have been a lot better if Lily and James Potter had not been killed," said Harry as he sat down next to her, also knowing that he would not have been able to concoct a false identity because Dumbledore got the bright idea that he should proclaim Harry Potter to be dead had their parents survived. "I don't like it anymore than you do, you don't even remember that night."

"Do you really think Voldemort's really gone?" asked Elizabeth suddenly, causing Harry to look up at her with a confused expression, that question seemed to come out of left field.

"I don't know," said Harry slowly. "I and I think the rest of the world would like to believe he is but, there was never a body found."

"I was afraid of that, he could still be out there, waiting for the right moment," stated Elizabeth.

"Maybe, he might be out there, but who knows what state he might be in, he could be just hanging on," said Harry in an encouraging voice. "He may come back one day, but even at his height of power, he never attacked Hogwarts. Dumbledore's the only one that Voldemort is afraid of or so the legend goes."

"I just wish I knew for sure," muttered Elizabeth, she loved Hogwarts and everything about it, but she had a feeling she would have liked it a lot more if she had not been the one who was famous for defeating Voldemort.

"We all do," said Harry as he got to his feet. "I think I'm going to return to the feast right now, all of the festivities should have died down by now. I might be able to stomach some food now. Coming, Lizzie?"

"Might as well," said Elizabeth in a resigned voice, the truth was, a few minutes to clear her head properly was all she needed to remind herself that these people did not and should not matter to her. As Harry told her one time, these people would hail her as a hero one minute and then stab her in the back the next once the popular opinion changed.

In a dark musty shop in Knockturn Alley, a greasy looking man with a goatee looked around. He was expecting a very important client very soon that required some items of a sensitive nature.

"Do you have it?" asked a hooded figure, as she had two other imposing figures on either sides.

"Depends, do you have the gold?" asked the shopkeeper.

"Five hundred galleons just as you requested," said the hooded figure in a disgusted voice as she dropped the bag on the table and the shopkeeper reached underneath, pulling out a box from beneath the counter. The hooded figure took it, looking through half of the items required for her plan. "This is only half of what we requested, human."

"Yeah, well you get the other half once I've counted my gold," said the shopkeeper in a greedy voice but the hooded figure grabbed the shopkeeper by the arms. "What are you doing, lady?"

"Teaching you a lesson about your shoddy customer relations," said the hooded figure, as the hood went down, revealing a pale woman with a chalk white face and blond hair and piercing light blue eyes, opening her mouth to reveal a set of fangs.

"You're a v-v-v-v-vampire," stammered the shopkeeper.

"Very well, at least you're educated, but then you should know that I'm past feeding time," remarked the vampire in a bored voice as she looked into the man's eyes, rendering him in a dream like, apathetic state, causing him to be unable to move. Seconds later, she sank the fangs into the neck of the shopkeeper, draining him all of his blood. His blood was common and only served to nourish her for a few hours but it would have to do. The shopkeeper slumped to the ground pale and withered, shuddering and looking extremely weak. "Track down the rest of what we are owed, take anything else that might be of value to our cause in the future."

“Yes Mistress Eskara,” chanted her two slaves in a dull, submissive manner, as they tracked down what the shopkeeper had been hiding from them in the backroom.

“Very well, let us depart, before the Aurors or any vampire hunters come calling,” said Eskara softly as she stepped forward but paused, before she walked over to the counter and reclaimed her bag of gold, stepping on the weakened shop keeper, as her two slaves carried out the artifacts and restricted potion ingredients that they required for her plans. It would take many months to set up but her immortality gave her all the time in the world.

## Chapter Five: Fall Into Christmas.

Time seemed to pass at an extraordinary rate at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. For the first years, class work became a bit more difficult, as they were moving beyond weeks and weeks of mind numbing theory, into more practical work now that they have gotten the bare basics of magic down. Life at Hogwarts became more interesting as October turned into November and November was slowly fading, over halfway into the month. Elizabeth sat outside, looking over a few notes she made based off of some recent Potions that she made, perhaps enjoying one of the last nice days of the year. With her friends getting some last minute homework completed, rather than be bored and wait for them to get done, it would be a good time to look and reflect on a few things on what she learned.

"I thought I would never get that done, that essay was killer, if I have to look up one more goblin rebellion, I'll go completely mad," muttered Harry to himself as he walked outside, looking rather tired and irritated.

"I know tell me about it, I hated that essay, if you believe Binns, nothing's happened in magical history except for goblin rebellion after goblin rebellion," said Elizabeth with a shake of her head.

"Oh, hi, Lizzie," said Harry as he sat down next to her.

"The thing is that class would be loads more interesting if someone you know a bit more lively would teach the class," responded Elizabeth as she looked over her notes, double checking something.

"Very hard considering it is a ghost," said Harry which caused Elizabeth to snicker in amusement.

"Still seven more years of goblin rebellions and I'll lose my mind," said Elizabeth.

"Nah, more like five more years, I mean no one really takes the class after O.," corrected Harry. "They might if they taught something interesting like one of many dark lord uprising or the great house elf uprising of 1695."



"The great house elf uprising of 1695?" asked Elizabeth in amusement. "I remember seeing that somewhere, but it never specified what happened."

"Basically the reason why house elves are enslaved, a group of them tried to storm the Ministry of Magic and take over," replied Harry. "It's mentioned, but not really went into detail in the most of the textbooks, which is a bad thing considering every few years some muggleborn who thinks they're being cute and revolutionary decides to start a movement to free the house elves that falls flat on its face and the muggleborn being blackballed from the Wizarding World. And fact that sadly to say many of the house elves aren't treated well, they might hold a grudge if they are all freed."

"Hmm, interesting," said Elizabeth in an absent minded voice, as she checked her notes. "That's about all I can do with that one I think, maybe in a couple of years I can learn more to improve on it more."

"Mind if I have a look at your notes," replied Harry and Elizabeth nodded, as she handed Harry the notes, as he looked over them with interest, before nodding. "Lizzie, that was some really good work on some of these, I would have never thought of that. Still for the hiccup cure potion, you might want to add a unicorn hair, to preserve it a bit longer, as while its potent, it won't last more than a couple of weeks."

"Really thanks Harry, that does make a lot of sense," remarked Elizabeth as she took her notes back and make a note of Harry's advice with her quill. "I know it does seem silly for me to be spending this much time looking at magic, especially potions, but I've noticed a few flaws and it just annoys me if something that can be improved on is improved on."

"Hey, I agree with you, most magic is set in stone, you can't really change much but for can be improved, it should be," agreed Harry. "The problem is most people think everything's fine the way it is, they don't like to fix what they fell isn't really broken."

"Just because it works doesn't really mean it can't be better," replied Elizabeth, as she looked over her notes. "I haven't really went too far,

but I'm sure there are ways to make healing potions taste better, if people could bother to look for them."

"I and I'm sure a lot of people would hope so," said Harry, remembering the one time where he had to take a potion to help heal his arm when he broke it, after hastily diving to the crowd after a near collision with a Muggle airplane. The foul taste lingered for quite some time. "The thing is, you might be able to privately make your own improvements, but the problem is trying to get them made officially."

"I know, I read that, saying that it takes a lot of paperwork to get the official version of a potion or spell change," agreed Elizabeth with a sigh. "The more I think about it, the less people want change or at least the people that matter."

"It's been that way for sometime, but what you're doing is great, you should keep doing it if it's something you enjoy," encouraged Harry. "Who knows maybe someday you might get it through someone's thick head that it could be change."

Elizabeth nodded, pleased that Harry was interested in what she was doing. Granted, Lisa and Padma showed some interest, but not to the extent that she was. Outside Ravenclaw, it was hard to even get any interest, with the exception of Harry.

"Maybe," said Elizabeth as she looked over her notes.

"So what are you doing for the holidays, Lizzie?" asked Harry suddenly causing Elizabeth's eyes to snap up, this was a sudden and unexpected question for him to ask. Truthfully she had given it much thought, normally for Christmas, she had to slave away on the stove all day while Dudley got to enjoy his dozens of presents and then get sent to bed early. Despite it being not too much different from any other day of the year, it still seemed a bit miserable considering it was Christmas.

"Haven't really thought of it, Dudley's planning on going home, but he's taunted me, saying that I'm not welcomed there for the holidays, I hexed him but that detention with Filch was worth it," said Elizabeth.

“Quite frankly, I don’t really want to go back there for Christmas or ever if I can help it. At least I can stay at school during Christmas, it’s just a shame that I’ll eventually have to go back there during the summer.”

“Yes,” remarked Harry as he looked off, who was not his fondest at Dumbledore, especially considering there was another attempt to the Ministry to take a closure look at Elizabeth’s living arrangements and another reply saying that they were assured that everything was fine. Quite frankly, Harry was still trying to figure out why Dumbledore’s opinion would matter, but he did know what his mother had said and quite frankly had to believe it, that the Ministry believed that Dumbledore was the authority on Elizabeth’s living arrangements. The fact that will of Lily and James was nonexistent also did not help disprove Dumbledore’s statements.

“So what are you doing, Harry?” asked Elizabeth curiously, bringing Harry out of his thoughts.

“Oh, I believe I’m going home, I’d like to get out of this school for a couple of weeks, I did hear it gets a bit boring where there are no classes and when most of everyone is away for the holidays, that’s what Dora told me anyway, she stayed to study for her N.E. last year and the time went slow,” remarked Harry.

“Looks like everyone is going home, Lisa and Padma are going home too and I pretty much guess Draco will as well,” said Elizabeth with a nod. “Don’t really mind all that much, I’ve had to amuse myself for years, with Dudley scaring away everyone who looked like they might want to be my friend. I’ve had all sorts of practice.”

“You know, you’re welcome to visit my house during the holidays, Mum suggested to me, but I was going to invite you anyway,” replied Harry and Elizabeth jerked her head forward. “It’s Christmas, I mean you really shouldn’t be alone on the holidays.”

“I don’t know Harry, I really don’t want to intrude, I think I’ll be fine at Hogwarts,” said Elizabeth.

"I really think you should come," said Harry. "Go somewhere other than your relatives or school for a change, it might do you some good to have a change of pace."

"Are you sure I wouldn't be too much trouble?" asked Elizabeth with a frown, even though she wanted to take Harry up on his offer and spend somewhere other than school and the Dursleys. It was so unfortunate that she would have to return there in the summer and half wanted to wish Harry if she could stay with his family throughout those holidays, but she did not want to intruder herself on his life too much.

"No trouble at all, Luna and Ginny should also swing by as well sometime, you'll finally be able to meet them, they both told me they're dying to meet you, after I've told them about you in our letters," said Harry. "Lizzie, we both know that you want to come, so why not."

"Well since you twisted my arm," replied Elizabeth with a grin, who felt she might actually enjoy Christmas for once, considering that she would not have to slave over the stove all day for a brilliant meal that she would barely eat or see Dudley get a load of presents that he would break or get bored with after a few weeks, as she felt a chilling wind. The temperature appeared to have dropped.

"Better get inside, looks like a storm might be kicking up quickly," remarked Harry casually and Elizabeth nodded, it was amazing how the weather could turn tide so easily as she followed Harry inside, glad that her holiday plans were something a bit more exciting than spending it wandering the school, watching the minutes tick by.

--

Dudley Dursley was far from happy right now, as he sat on the bed in the hospital wing at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. The black ooze had finally stopped spurting out of his ears. He spent half of his time in the hospital wing it appeared. He thought being a wizard would make him be able to put anyone who disagreed with him in their proper place. However, it was far from the wondrous experience that Dudley had imagined. In fact, getting sorted into Slytherin caused

more problems than it was worth. When he had heard the house was supposed to be for the cunning and the ambitious, Dudley was pleased. He knew he was cunning and felt that since he came from a normal background, he would be able to control the Slytherin house, like he had his neighborhood.

However, something had happened, the Slytherin house laughed and mocked Dudley. He tried to bully a first year girl who was a third of his size to show teach them a lesson, not realizing her older brother was a seventh year and a prefect. Even though the girl had hexed Dudley and caused tentacles to burst out of his head, the older Slytherins had saw to teach Dudley lessons every time he tried to take his rightful place as the leader of the Slytherin house. The prefect, obviously holding a grudge for Dudley's attempted bullying of his younger sister, had passed off the incidents as accidents, with Dudley foolishly experimenting in magic. Snape, his head of house, believed it but even Dudley got the sense that Snape did not like him for some reason, due to the fact that the only Slytherin Snape put in detention was Dudley.

It made him almost want to write home and beg his parents to bring him back home, but Dudley saw his freak cousin, adored by all, even though not for who she was but rather what she did. How her grades seemed to only get better than his each and every day, how she was treated like a hero, even the most hardened Slytherins acknowledged her fame and thought of her to be a point of interest. Then Dudley on the other side was treated by something akin to a slug, being hexed almost daily. He would leave but he wanted to prove that he was better then his cousin in every single way. Personally Dudley blamed Black, it was all his fault, no doubt he helped spread lies about him that caused him to be the subject of ridicule. There was no way that the freak would even dare to go against Dudley, to spread such rubbish, she would be in trouble once she returned home. Once Dudley got his hands on Black, he would make him pay.

At least over Christmas, Dudley felt he could get everything he deserved, it filled Dudley with pleasure to see that his cousin had no place she was welcomed over the holidays.

--

“So it looks like I’m not going to have to stay at Hogwarts after all,” said Elizabeth in a brightened voice the next day, as she, Lisa, and Padma had returned from an eventful Defense Against the Dark Arts class, where Savannah lectured them on high powered light spells, a useful tool for weakening vampires. While there was nothing that could truly replicate sunlight, there were several that were useful with a little application and consider the recent rash of vampire attacks “Harry invited me to spend the holidays with his family.”

“You seem rather excited,” commented Padma lightly.

“Well...promise me that this won’t leave this corridor and Harry won’t find out,” responded Elizabeth looking at her two friends with a serious look on her face.

“Liz, don’t worry, we won’t breath a word to this, we’ve seen exactly how angry you can get and even if we weren’t friends, it still isn’t a good idea to get on your bad side,” said Lisa.

“Yeah, not a word to anyone,” agreed Padma as Elizabeth looked over her shoulder to ensure that no one was coming.

“Well, ever since I’ve met Harry, I can’t explain why, but some reason he seems like the brother I’ve never had and in any event, he seems to be the closest thing to family that I ever had,” replied Elizabeth as Lisa and Padma just stood, unreadable expressions on their faces. “I know, silly, I know.”

“Considering your relatives, I wouldn’t think so,” said Lisa slowly, and in fact her and Padma had considered doing something about their friend’s living situation, but Harry had discouraged them, saying that his mother was working on it and that the situation was more complex than they could ever realize. Reluctantly, they agreed and told Harry that if they could help in anyway, don’t hesitate to ask. Granted, they were a pair of first years and their opinion meant less than nothing to the Ministry but still the more voices that protested the better.

"Yeah, Liz, I would think you were related to flobberworms before you were related to Dursleys," agreed Padma. "For a minute, I thought you were going to say you had a crush on him or something."

Elizabeth looked sickened. Harry was like her brother, that sort of thing might have been acceptable for purebloods but it just felt odd to her.

"Of course, I can easily see now that's not the case," added Padma hastily, as Lisa seemed to be biting her lip, trying not to laugh at her friend's discomfort.

"Really, he's not that bad looking," said Lisa with a laugh as Elizabeth just glared at her.

"Not funny, not funny at all, at least you didn't think I had a crush on Dudley or something," replied Elizabeth with a revolted look on her face at this thought.

"Now really, that's going to be haunting my nightmares for years to come," drawled the voice of Draco Malfoy as he stepped up.

"Malfoy, how much did you hear?" asked Lisa abruptly, as the trio of girls exchanged horrified looks.

"Relax, Turpin, everything, if I was a sentimental type or a girl, I'd find you thinking of Harry as a brother kind of cute," said Draco with a smirk. "Although I do wonder what Harry would say..."

"Tell him and I'll use your testicles for hexing practice," said Elizabeth, her temper raising.

"Really, such language, what would the world think if they saw their precious savior say such things," said Draco in a bored tone of voice. "But don't worry, I won't tell Harry, you should, but it's not my place to tell him."

"Okay, Draco, it's obvious you weren't here for a social visit, what do you want?" asked Elizabeth who was not in a pleasant mood after Draco had eavesdropped on her conversation.

“Silencing charms, you should learn them,” commented Draco lightly before he stood up straight. “Now, yes, you’re right, Professor Snape has told me to tell you that he wants to see you in his office right now.”

“Snape, what could he want?” asked Elizabeth, trying to rack her brain for anything that might have given Snape the need to see her in a matter that seemed to be rather urgently.

“He just told me to track you down and send him to his office, I don’t make a habit of questioning Professor Snape’s decisions, I prefer to see the next day,” replied Draco. “I’ll leave to go then.”

Elizabeth nodded, as she gave her friends a quick good bye and quickly made her way towards the shortest path down towards the dungeons. As Draco had rightfully pointed out, Snape was not a man who was willing to wait. Making her way down, it took only twenty minutes to reach her destination and quickly she moved forward, raising her hand to knock on the office door of the Potions Professor.

“Enter,” said Snape from inside the office and Elizabeth obeyed, walking into the office of Snape. Much to her surprise, Neville Longbottom was sitting there, looking like he’d rather be on death row than sitting in the office. “Feel free to have a seat at anytime Miss Potter.”

Elizabeth sat down right in a chair besides Neville, who seemed to be completely ashamed at the moment.

“I will cut to the chase, as I am certain you are wondering why I had you summoned,” responded Snape crisply. “Normally, I do not take a personal matter in the performances or lack there of involving the students I teach, but this year, the Gryffindor and Slytherin Potions class includes many first year students who have very influential parents in the Ministry. Thanks to Longbottom’s Potion skills, he poses a threat and if they were to get injured, I would be held liable for it.”



"What does this have to do with me, Professor?" asked Elizabeth curiously.

"Miss Potter, if you have even more small bit of your father's arrogance, I would think you would realize that you are one of my better students and I daresay you surpass many second years and even a few third years," said Snape calmly. "Therefore, I am instructing you to tutor Longbottom, perhaps you could make some progress with him. I am confident that your ability may be able to raise his grade up to a solid poor level grade."

Elizabeth had heard about Neville's performance in potions. He seemed to cause some sort of explosion every class or melt his cauldron. It was quite lucky that there were only a few minor injuries, but as the potions got more advanced, Elizabeth could see why Snape would have a cause for concern, especially for the reasons that he mentioned.

"Mr. Longbottom it seems like you have something to say, so you better say it now," said Snape sharply.

"Well, Professor, I mean, I'm sure that Hermione Granger would be able to help me..." stated Neville but Snape held his hand up as if to silence the timid first year boy.

"Longbottom, if I thought you could be helped by reading book after book, I would have just ordered you to do so, but you need someone who is a bit less restricted of what they can do if you have a hope to be helped," said Snape as Neville backed down. "And yes, an older student is a possibility, but I am confident in Miss Potter's abilities and do hope they will be sufficient to make progress against you."

"I'll do what I can, Professor," said Elizabeth, knowing that Snape did not offer her an option of doing this or not.

"I'm certain," said Snape. "And Mr. Longbottom, I expect you to put in some progress and not waste Miss Potter's time or there will be consequences."

Neville nodded fearfully, looking up at Snape with widened eyes as Elizabeth just sighed.

"I shall give you permission to use an unused area of dungeons off to the side," said Snape calmly. "You are both dismissed."

Elizabeth stepped back and allowed Neville to walk from the office. It seemed to be the valiant thing to do, considering he looked wanting to get away from Snape. Quickly, Elizabeth left, something about Snape's office seemed a bit foreboding to her as well.

"So what do you suppose we will do with this tutoring thing?" asked Neville, as he looked over his shoulder.

"On the weekends, on noon at both Saturday and Sunday for two or three hours on both days, that seems about right to me," replied Elizabeth without really thinking about it.

"Right, fine, I guess I'll see you there then," answered Neville as the two first years went their separate ways, moving down the hallway.

--

In a smoky pool hall, a pair of hooded figures appeared, moving towards the back. The patrons seemed to not care or were too drunk to take notice to these figures. Quickly, a pair of them removed their hoods and entered the back room of the bar, where Eskara was sitting in a pitch black, cold room, with a thick book in front of her that she was thumbing through.

"Report to me your findings," replied Eskara swiftly.

"Mistress, vampire hunters, they took out the other three of our group, they might have tailed us here for all I know," said one of the vampires in softly and Eskara sat up straight, her eyes widening in absolutely hatred at the thought that someone had might have discovered her current location.

"Fools, you were to lead them off of a cliff or something, not here," said Eskara as her two minions cowered in the back. "Return to the

bar and divert their attention while I set out and return to another base of operation, I will send word to you if you do not fail.”

Eskara’s minions wasted little time, as Eskara scooped up the book she was studying, along with the artifacts she had acquired. She had nearly unlocked the secrets for the artifacts, but it would take time to properly utilize them and now since she had to move them, time would set back even more. Quickly but carefully, she placed all of her equipment in a bottomless bag and twisted, before she made her leave, just as she heard explosions in the bar, no doubt signaling the arrival of her enemies.

The two vampires stood, as the patrons of the bar seemed to know enough to get going, as a surly looking middle aged gentleman dropped down, pointing his wand.

“Freeze, you blood sucking skum!” rasped the vampire hunter but one of the vampires rushed forward, fangs bared. The hunter was careful not to look the vampire in the eye and quickly he threw a sphere shaped object to the crowd. It exploded, releasing a cloud of garlic, stunning the vampire. The vampire shrieked as the wooden stake was impaled right into its chest through its heart, before it dropped to the ground. The other vampire grabbed the hunter from behind but the hunter released another garlic bomb. An explosion echoed, the garlic weakening the vampire even more, before a quick binding had put the arms and legs of vampires together with ropes coated in garlic. “Okay, vampire, you have answers, I have questions, spill it, where is Eskara.”

“I’d rather perish than betray the Mistress,” responded the vampire in a defiant voice but the vampire hunter removed a red orb, before turning it towards the dark creature. A light shined right in the vampire’s face, causing him great discomfort.

“Rethink your stance on cooperating with me, vampire,” growled the hunter, as the vampire’s skin appeared to blister under the light and he screamed. It would be several hours before it could destroy him, but until that time, the pain was inhumane. “Well, the information, give it to me.”

"She was here, left right when you came, I don't know what she might be up to, I am merely a lowly servant," said the vampire, as the light blistered his face, the hunter just gritted his teeth, with a sneer. "Please, believe me, I have no other information for you, please, you have to believe me..."

The hunter dropped the vampire down to the ground, as he was wrapped in the garlic ropes. Pulling out of his wand and a yellow disc, the hunter tapped his wand to the disc, before placing it right inside the vampire's mouth. Trench coat behind him, the vampire hunter departed, as a magically simulated and amplified light filled the bar, causing the dark creature to burst to dust. Even though he was under strict watch and restricted to leave the school thanks to Dumbledore, Savannah would still have liked to know that Eskara had been sighted in the area. Quickly, the wizened hunter left, leaving the destroyed beasts. Aurors would be by soon to clean up the pieces and given the fact that this particular hunter had been fined several times previously, it would be a bad idea for him to stick around.

--

In the dungeons, Elizabeth look on with a sigh, as Neville arrived for that blasted tutoring that Snape had basically forced on her. Neville looked around, seeming a bit more relaxed then she heard he was from Draco in Potions class.

"Alright, we're going to be here for a couple of hours, so I think the best thing to do was to find out what you do and don't know," responded Elizabeth as she looked at Neville.

"I know it fine, the properties of plants, but it just seems like I make mistakes and misread the quantity of ingredients beyond what the instructions say," said Neville in a hopeless voice. "It's just when I get into that class, I fall apart and..."

"Hmm, I can see what your problem might be, you are terrified of Professor Snape," said Elizabeth and Neville paled, shaking his head. "Some Gryffindor you are, the most cowardly thing is not admitting when you have a fear of someone, I wonder how you even got sorted in that house."

"Snape is well, well, there's something about him," stammered Neville and Elizabeth sighed.

"Longbottom calm yourself down and repeat after me," said Elizabeth, fixing a firm look upon the first year Gryffindor. "There is no reason for me to be afraid of Professor Snape, he isn't going to chop me up and use me as Potions ingredients."

"There is no reason for me to be afraid of Professor Snape, he isn't going to chop me up and use me as Potions ingredients," muttered Neville.

"That's nice, it would be even nicer if I could bloody hear what you're saying!" shouted Elizabeth, causing Neville to nearly fall out of his chair in terror. "You should be in Slytherin with the rest of the cowards.'

Elizabeth obviously did not think of Slytherins as cowards, well unless you counted Dudley, but she knew exactly what the consensus of the Gryffindor house was against Slytherin and fully intended to exploit it.

"Now wait a minute, just because you're tutoring me in Potions, doesn't give you the right to insult me," said Neville in a firm voice.

"Really, prove me wrong, excel in Potions or fall flat on your face, I don't really care, but if you continue to let your fear of Professor Snape dictate your performance in class, you won't prove me wrong" replied Elizabeth in a firm voice. "Don't be scared of Snape, as long as you don't cause trouble in his class, there will be no reason for you to fear him, unless you are spineless coward, a disappointment."

Neville paled, even though she did not know it, Elizabeth had struck a nerve. There were times where his grandmother had told him that he should do everything to live up to the reputation of his parents. In fact, it took in nearly a year later than the average to show signs of magic and he had overheard his grandmother calling him a disappointment, due to the fact they thought he was a squib. Obviously, she never berated him in front of his face and fact had been overjoyed once he had finally showed his first signs of magic.

"I'm not a disappointment," argued Neville and Elizabeth just remained standing, finally he was showing a bit of confidence and that was one of the most important elements in concocting Potions, confidence in one's skills.

"Now, you shouldn't give Snape any cheek, even I wouldn't do that, but don't fear him," said Elizabeth. "Each and every Potion that's been taught so far, you're going to do them again and again, until they are completely perfect. Once you have perfected them and once you can function in a Potions class without going to pieces at the mere mention of Snape. Is that understood, Longbottom?"

"Fine, I understand," said Neville firmly, trying not to show any fear of facing his fears and had a feeling that Elizabeth Potter might be right up there with Professor Snape.

"Good, with each Potion, you will read the recipe over twice, making sure you missed nothing and don't get distracted, that is where you will fail," said Elizabeth and she began to get Neville working on the first potion they had ever learned, giving help when it was necessary but mostly allowing Neville to work. A couple more tries had lead to a slight improvement, as Neville's confidence in his own ability began to rise. There was still much work to be done, but there was some small improvements slowly working there way into the Potions he was completing.

--

The weeks wound by and it was the day before the Christmas holidays. A handful of people were staying at Hogwarts for the holidays, but Elizabeth was not one of them. Harry had confirmed that she was going to spend the holidays at his house and would be taking the Floo Network straight from the train to that destination.

Elizabeth lost her footing as she came out of the Floo Network and it was only through a bit of luck that she did not land flat on her face when she had came out of the fireplace. Thankfully, Harry did not laugh at her, in fact he looked at her with a real sympathetic look on his face.

"It takes some getting used to, Floo Travel, I've only really mastered it in the last couple of years, the trick is trying to stay still when you are travelling," advised Harry.

"Kind of hard to stay still when your head is spinning and you feel like you're going to throw up," said Elizabeth as she gave her head a shook, trying to stead herself, as Harry grabbed her arm, before guiding her to a chair off to the side of the fireplace.

"Well yeah, it kind of is," agreed Harry as Elizabeth got her bearings. "The Floo Network is not used by most, Apparation is a bit straight forward, but underage people do not have the magical experience to pull it out most of the time. So until them, the Floo, of course some people use broomsticks, but it could take a lot longer to get to where you're going."

"Not to mention that it is much easier to be seen by Muggles on broomsticks, while Floo and Apparation are much more security," said Andromeda as she walked into the room. "Nice to see you again Elizabeth, hello Harry, welcome home. I'm sorry that I could not have met either of you at the train station, I was expecting Nymphadora to come home for her break today and you know how draining Auror training can be. She just arrived about a minute before you did and she looks dead on her feet. She's in the kitchen right now recovering; lunch is in there too if you two want it."

"I think that would be good, how about you Lizzie?" asked Harry.

"Yes, Harry that would be fine with me, I didn't eat much breakfast today, too busy packing," replied Elizabeth as she followed Harry into the kitchen, with Andromeda following closely behind them as Harry looked at Nymphadora who was sitting at the table with a glazed and tired look on her eyes. Even her Metamorphmagus abilities were not sufficient to disguise how tired she was.

"Oh, hi Harry, Mum," said Nymphadora in a tired voice as she shook her head before seeing the new addition. "And you must be Elizabeth Potter, Harry's told me so much about you in the letters I could leave."

"Harry has to me as well, is it true that you once hung a boy by his ankles from the dungeon when he called you your first name?" asked Elizabeth.

"No, it was actually the Astronomy Tower," replied Nymphadora with a sigh.

"I still don't know why you don't like your name, Nymphadora, it's a lovely name," said Andromeda.

"Yes Mum and we wonder why people think the Black family has a history of mental instability," said Nymphadora with a roll of her eyes, as she pulled out a thick tome from her bag that looked to have an endless amount of pages. "But I've got to eat quickly, because I still have work to do."

"I thought you were supposed to on vacation," said Elizabeth suddenly.

"For me this is a vacation," replied Nymphadora as she held up the book, that actually required a slight levitating charm. "Have to read this, all about combat spells and situations where they are ethically to use by Ministry standard."

"And leave it to the Ministry of Magic to have an entire book that size of a cinderblock that detailed this," replied Harry with a slight nod. "Now let me guess, you can't do a stunning spell on a sixth generation pure blood from a seventy two degree angle while a nun is watching on the third Tuesday of the month or something like that."

"If only it were that simple," said Nymphadora. "First year, you'd be surprised how many people would drop after the few weeks but if you survive the first year, it's likely you'd survive the entire experience. The horror stories and the strict requirements do scare people off. So, I just got to hang in there, five months down, only seven months ago."

"Nice positive spin on things if I may say so," replied Harry.



"I'm actually glad I'm just training, this entire mess with vampires, at least it's out of my hands," said Nymphadora in a grateful voice, as she looked at the book. "This entire book, in the ten days that I have off."

'And it's only a thousand pages," said Harry.

"A thousand and seventy two actually, but why get hung up on minor details like that," said Nymphadora as she hastily finished her lunch, as Elizabeth and Harry both helping themselves to some. "Bye you two, I hope I can see you again in the next couple of months and yes Mum, I'll try to get some sleep, if my schedule ever leaves room for it."

Nymphadora walked up to her room, the book hanging right by her, as Harry and Elizabeth remained at the table, eating and talking about the first few months of Hogwarts.

--

Ginny had half of a mind to hex Ron, as he went on and on about Harry, how he was a bad influence on both her and Elizabeth Potter.

"She's being corrupted by him," insisted Ron as they were at the Burrow the day after her brothers returned to Hogwarts. "Ginny, he's scheming, he and Malfoy are friends, Malfoy's a Slytherin, and he's the reason why she did not get into Gryffindor like she was supposed to. She won't even talk to me, she thinks I'm less than a slug."

"Jeez, Ron, I wonder what gave her that impression," said Ginny dryly, as Harry had written to her, telling her how Elizabeth was frustrated on how Ron had followed her around like a lost puppy dog, how she finally lost her temper and hexed Ron. Harry seemed proud that his sister could pull off the full body bind so soon and Ron had been shaken up. Unfortunately, he had not given the hint.

"Black's been feeding her lies," protested Ron and Ginny sighed, Ron could be petty sometimes.

“Or maybe, just maybe, she’s made her own opinion on you and doesn’t really like you, did that thought ever cross your mind Ron?” asked Ginny and Ron looked at Ginny like she had grown two heads. She pitied any girl who would be foolish enough to put up with Ron, jumping to conclusions without thinking, running his mouth without engaging his brain.

“Ginny, you’re supposed to be my sister, offer me some bloody support,” said Ron. “What should I do to get her to notice me?”

“You won’t, let’s face it, you’ve made a bad impression on her just like you did with Harry,” said Ginny. “Stay away from her or you could get yourself hurt. You did say she has a temper.”

“Yes and it is kind of amusing when it is directed towards Hermione Granger, the know it all bookworm deserves it,” said Ron in a fond tone of voice that gave Ginny the strong urge to vomit. “You have to help me Ginny, what I am doing wrong?”

“Look Ron, even if I did want to help you, I can’t work miracles,” said Ginny and Ron opened his mouth, but Ginny decided to cut this conversation short. “Look I could have sworn that Mum told you to get done with your homework.”

“Snape shouldn’t have given us that essay, I mean it’s Christmas,” replied Ron sullenly. “It’s all Dursley’s fault, slimy Slytherin, if he wouldn’t have talked back to Snape, all of us wouldn’t have got punished. Now five feet on the properties of the body parts of the unicorn and how they’re used in Potions, it’s insane, Snape’s trying to kill us.”

“Well, the sooner you get it done, the sooner you don’t have to worry about it anymore,” replied Ginny. “Plus, I’ll tell Mum that you’ve been begging me on ways to harass Elizabeth Potter.”

Ron just walked off in a huff, muttering under his breath. She was supposed to be a hero, in Gryffindor, but she was a Ravenclaw and could care less about her fame. If Ron had her fame and her wealth, he would rub it in the face of everyone else in the world at every chance he got.

Ginny sighed. Ron was gone, Fred and George had gone off to Merlin only knows where, Percy was upstairs, no doubt polishing his prefect badge, Bill and Charlie were both at their jobs, her father was at the Ministry, and her mother was in the kitchen.

"Mum, I'm going to Luna's!" called Ginny.

"Alright dear, but do wear a sweater, it's dreadfully cold out there and make sure you come back by dinner," responded Molly Weasley from the kitchen and Ginny nodded, she was going to Luna's and then they were heading straight to Harry's, unknown to her mother of course.

Harry sat in the room, reading the Daily Prophet, as Elizabeth was reading a book that she had found on the bookshelf on advanced defensive magic. It was obvious that Elizabeth was getting a bit more out of her reading experience than Harry was his. The Ministry appeared to be cutting back funding on the Auror department and education and was spending more to enforce werewolf legislation which was a bit troubling considering vampires appeared to be a more dangerous threat than werewolves. In fact, unless it was a full moon, they were more than harmless. As Remus Lupin had told him once, on the rare occasions he was able to visit, this anti-werewolf legislation did more to encourage werewolf attacks than discourage them.

A pair of figures emerged from the Floo network, and Harry looked up, a smile on his face that put the disturbing news he had read in the Daily Prophet out of his mind.

"Ginny, Luna!" yelled Harry. "Come in. Your journey was good I take it."

"Yes, Harry, good, the Floo managed to dry my clothes, that storm out there, I should have took the Floo there, but Dad's adamant we don't take any unnecessary Floo trips," said Ginny.

"Well he's right, the cost of Floo powder has gone through the roof late," added Luna. "That's why Dad makes his own but of course, it

took some time to perfect and he would have not let us use it if it was not perfectly safe. The time he ended up in China when he was trying Floo to Diagon Alley was kind of funny but he fixed it in the end.”

“I remember that, that was a huge miscalculation,” replied Ginny with a smile.

“Elizabeth these are my friends Ginny Weasley and Luna Lovegood, girls, this is Elizabeth Potter,” said Harry.

“Nice to meet you Elizabeth,” said Ginny, shaking her hand.

“Same with me,” added Luna, as she shook Elizabeth’s hand.

“I’ve been looking forward to seeing you, Harry’s told me a lot about the both of you,” responded Elizabeth, she was confident she would like both of these girls, she trusted Harry’s judgment. She found it hard to believe that Ginny was Ron’s sister, other than the red hair and the freckles, there seemed to be no evidence. Then again, she was related to Dudley.

“Nothing too incriminating I hope,” replied Ginny.

“Come on Ginny, I would never say anything bad about either of you,” said Harry.

“No, I know you wouldn’t Harry,” answered

“I’m sure you have a lot to talk about that you could not just talk about in the letters,” said Luna and Harry nodded, she was perspective as always.

“Believe me, we do, shall we go upstairs then,” said Harry but Harry paused. “By the way, before I forget, Draco said he might try and stop by today, but his father has his time booked up.”

“Yeah, the few times he remembered to write, he did mention that Lucius was keeping a shorter leash on him than ever before, especially all the banquets and fundraisers that the Malfoys have to

attend on behalf of the Minister of Magic over the holidays” said Ginny. “If not, we’ll see him over the summer or Hogwarts next year.”

Several hours later, Ginny and Harry had entered the attic. Currently, Luna and Elizabeth were engrossed in talking about potential modifications in Potions and low level spells, it was mostly rehashed from what Harry and Elizabeth talked about at Hogwarts. Ginny thought it sounded interesting, but she felt that she did not have the patience for experimenting.

“She’s going to figure it out sooner or later you know,” replied Harry with a sigh. “She’s smart, if she ever finds out she had a twin brother, named Harry, that was presumed dead, born around the same time she’ll put the pieces together. This is one time where I’m glad Dumbledore managed to stick his nose somewhere and get my name erased.”

“Tell her then,” said Ginny and Harry just crossed his arms, not saying anything. “You’re going to be stubborn about this, aren’t you?”

“You know me too well, Ginny,” said Harry with a smirk. “After what I’ve learned what she’s been through at the Dursleys, I both want to tell her and don’t want to tell her. That makes sense doesn’t it?”

“For you it does,” said Ginny.

“The twin bond is still there, faint, but still there, once the blood adoption ritual happened, it blocked most of it out, but it’s powerful magic that can’t be blocked,” said Harry. “She’ll never forgive me, for thinking that the Dursleys were her only family and were her only options for life.”

“She won’t be too happy if she finds out that you’ve been keeping this from you,” countered Ginny. “And Dumbledore was the one that arranged for her to place her there, not you.”

“I know, my parents’ will lost or never made, no one seems to know, so Dumbledore did what he thought was right and I’m sure he actually does mean well, but time has passed him by and he’s woefully ” replied Harry with a sigh. “I wish Mum would have figured

out a way to get someone who didn't consider Dumbledore's word the gospel truth."

"If you had solid proof other that could prove Dumbledore's word wrong, you might be able to get her away," suggested Ginny with a shrug.

"Lizzie's word I have but that might not be good enough, I'm sure Dumbledore isn't the only one who was in favor of her being at the Dursleys, but others might have reasons that are a bit less benevolent than keeping her safe," said Harry.

"True," agreed Ginny. "I can't or won't make you do anything, but tell her who you really are."

"When the time is right, I will," responded Harry, as him and Ginny walked downstairs. It felt liberating to have someone in on his secret close to his age. It offered him a different perspective from his adoptive mother or sister.

--

The holidays moved along rather quickly, too quickly for Elizabeth's liking. As much as she liked school, it was nice to be happy for once outside of it. It was with a heavy heart that she wondered what would happen if she tried to stay somewhere other than the Dursleys for the summer. She wanted to ask Andromeda if she could stay there, but a part of her felt guilty of intruding on their hospitality for too long. Her other friends were possibilities as well, but the same reason.

"WAKE UP, IT'S CHRISTMAS!" shouted Harry from outside the door on Christmas day. "Come on Lizzie, you can sleep in any other day of the year, right now it's Christmas, up time to get up."

"So," replied Elizabeth groaning, as she looked at the clock, it was five o'clock in the morning.

"So, what do you mean so, it's Christmas!" shouted Harry. "Presents!"

“Yeah right, like someone would give me presents,” muttered Elizabeth in a sleepy voice. She got Harry something and her friends as well, but she far from expected that she would get anything.

“Then I guess all of those presents that say to Elizabeth underneath the tree must be an illusion,” said Harry. “Trust me, I think a few people would have given you presents, including me, so up young lady, before I use a tickling charm on your feet.”

“If you’re pulling my leg, I’ll hex you into oblivion,” said Elizabeth, who was not a morning person.

“I’d never do anything like that to you,” said Harry as he stepped back. “Get dressed but if you’re not down in ten minutes, I’ll be back for you.”

“Good, go, I’ll be down,” said Elizabeth with a yawn. She truly considered Harry to be the closest thing to a brother she ever had, as he both supported her and annoyed her at the same time. Quickly she managed to put on some clothes, they did not match, but she never really fussed off of things like that.

Almost an hour later, Elizabeth had joined Andromeda, Harry, and Nymphadora downstairs.

“Finally,” replied Harry.

“I told him he would grow out of this when he got older,” remarked Andromeda. “Biggest mistake I’ve ever made.”

“Well, that’s what you get Mum,” responded Nymphadora. “So should we get on with it before Harry pops.”

“Very funny, Nymphadora,” said Harry sarcastically shaking his head as she glared at him for the use of her full name, as quickly presents were passed around. Elizabeth’s eyes widened as she saw she had a respectable pile of presents. It was nowhere near what Dudley got but it was the thought that counted.

"I actually have presents," muttered Elizabeth but Harry heard her and wanted to set the Weasley Twins on the Dursleys. Those barbarians had deprived his sister of presents on Christmas day, really a lesser crime when put in perspective, but still it bordered on absurd. In fact, Harry met his wand, his broomstick, and all the gold in his Gringotts vault that Dudley got a huge pile of presents.

"Go ahead then," prompted Harry encouraging voice and Elizabeth eagerly began to open her gifts.

"Those books are rare and a bit advanced, but after what Harry told me, I thought you might like them," said Andromeda as Elizabeth opened the presents, referring to the books from the Black family library that she inherited through Sirius's will. They were duplicate copies and had valuable information.

"I can use these, they should give me some more ideas on a project of mine," said Elizabeth gratefully, as she opened up a gift from Draco that contained a few of the rarer Potions ingredients that were strictly regulated by the Ministry. His note indicated that he used his father's connections to get them for Elizabeth. Moving over, she opened the presents from Ginny and Luna. She received a variety of Wizarding sweets from Ginny and trial three months subscription to the Quibbler from Luna. Based on what Luna said, Elizabeth felt she would enjoy the paper. She always had a soft spot in her heart for odd things, mostly because it was opposite to normal life the Dursleys liked to live.

"Wait a minute, they actually got you something," said Harry in a bit of astonishment as he saw that the next gift was the Dursleys. It appeared to be a small box and Elizabeth was a bit surprised but as she opened the gift.

"Wicked, it's a paper clip, just what I've always wanted!" cried Elizabeth sarcastically before she moved towards the next gift, which was from both Harry and Nymphadora. "A wand holster, hmm, that could be of use."

"Yes, it's to protect your wand from being summoned from others and besides, after Moody lectured us for two hours on Elementary wand



safety when he visited Auror training, I thought it might be a good gift,” said Nymphadora. “Harry agreed to chip in.”

“Thanks Harry, Dora,” said Elizabeth as she moved through her other gifts, from Padma and Lisa which were more candy and books. Thumbing through the books, Elizabeth felt they would be of some use. She had some notes to write, thanking her friends for the gifts she received.

After dinner, Harry had called her into the hallway to talk to her privately. He had another parcel in his hand.

“The wand hostler was only part of my gift, but it was more of a gift from Dora than from me, said Harry as he handed it to Elizabeth.

“Really Harry, being friends with you is more than enough for me,” said Elizabeth but she opened the gift and looked over it with interest. The initials L.E. were on the cover, Elizabeth wondered what the significance was of it was.

“Mum inherited all of the Black family possessions, when Sirius Black, the former head of the Black family, died, he was your godfather you know,” said Harry causing Elizabeth to look up in astonishment.

“I had a godfather,” replied Elizabeth in confusion. “What happened to him?”

“He was killed by a follower of Lord Voldemort the day after the incident happened,” said Harry. “Considering his mother was judged mentally incompetent by the Wizengamot several months earlier, Sirius was given status as head of the Black family because of being the oldest living male. So his will said that the possessions would go to the next oldest family member, which was Mum. Apparently, this was among them, this is the diary that Lily Evans kept during her time at Hogwarts.”

Elizabeth held the diary, like it was a long lost friend. Was this really her mother’s diary?

"I took a look at it," said Harry, which was a lie, he had read the diary from back to front several times already, but felt Elizabeth would have more use for it than he would. "It was amazing how much she was like you."

"Thanks Harry," said Elizabeth, turning so Harry could not see the tears forming in her eyes. It was nice to finally have something of her parents, no matter their questionable decision in sending her to live with the Dursleys.

"Merry Christmas, Lizzie," said Harry, as he left his twin sister alone with the diary.

That chapter was longer than I expected. Next chapter would be a transition chapter walking us through winter and early spring that will lead to the big climax of the first year.

## Chapter Six: Times of Transition:

It was with a heavy heart that Elizabeth returned to Hogwarts. She had been reading her mother's diary continuously ever since Harry had given it to her. It was quite amusing, especially considering that her mother went into long winded rants to herself about the arrogance James Potter. Obviously she got over it, James eventually had to mature, otherwise they would have never married and had a child. And Elizabeth had only completed her mother's writings for the first year of Hogwarts. It was obvious that a bad first impression was made right out the gate when they had first met, with both him and Sirius Black.

June 29th 1972:

Petunia is rather distant. Surely she can't be upset that I invited to Hogwarts and she wasn't. We used to be so close, but now she treats me like something foul, like something she scrapped off the body of her shoe. It's almost like I don't exist to her. Mum and Dad are pleased at the high marks I've gotten. Petunia's always been average in school, this can't be good for her self esteem. Maybe I should talk to her, she'd think I was nosing in her business but it might be a good idea to sort this mess out before she gets too upset.

Elizabeth closed the diary, with the train having almost arriving at Hogwarts. She would continue to read it later and in private. Quite frankly, it was obvious now more than ever that Petunia harbored an amount of jealousy for her sister's abilities to perform magic and thus her hatred seeped into Elizabeth's treatment. Vernon obviously was just a nasty sort that was willing to take out his frustrations on anything that he did not approve of and as for Dudley, well Dudley was just a product of the very worst of both of his parents. With magic, it only appeared to worsen Dudley's outlook on life and make him only even more arrogant.

Exiting from the train, with Harry and Draco following close behind, Elizabeth had hoped that the second half of the year at Hogwarts would be as interesting as the first half was.

Lucius Malfoy looked over his shoulder, wand in hand, as he made his way down a hallway. The fact that there was no light to guide his way really unnerved the head of the Malfoy family. The sound of dripping water did nothing to sooth his nerves. The fact that he only had a vague clue where he was also did nothing to help his mood. Reaching the end of the hallway, the door swung open, to reveal a pair of imposing vampires. They saw Lucius, baring their fangs at him

"I am here to see her," said Lucius swiftly, not allowing his intimidation show through on his face.

"The Mistress has been expecting you for some time," stated one of the vampires in an emotionless tone of voice, the stare blank.

"Through here," ordered the second vampire and Lucius stepped through towards a large room. It was impressive enough, if a bit barren and lifeless. On a large chair in front of a table, sat Eskara, with an impressive and regal, if frigid appearance. She waved her hand to clear away her work before Lucius could get a good enough look at what she does.

"In due time, you will find out with the rest of the world, Malfoy," said Eskara coldly. "You have news for me and I wish to hear it immediately, I can ill afford to remain idle for long and you being here is a security risk that could cause an annoyance to my plans."

"The vampire hunters, I heard, surely they could not trace you here, Dumbledore's kept a tighter leash on Savannah," replied Lucius.

"Do not assume you know what is going on due to rumors that are flowing through the Ministry, Savannah may be contained for a moment, but a free spirit such as him is not something that will bend to the will of others, even if that person is Albus Dumbledore" said Eskara. "Three times my followers have been sighted, but they are unimportant to the grand scheme of things but enough small talk. The robes, tell me your progress on them."

"Ah the robes," said Lucius calmly, choosing his next few words very carefully. "I'm afraid everything is going to be a bit behind schedule,

you see, an unforeseen flaw has been found that needs immediate correcting.”

“What sort of flaw, Lucius?” asked Eskara dangerously. “I was told that the robes would be prepared by the beginning of the year, you said you had the best wizards in the world looking over them, what flaw could have been found with the help you could have hired with your gold.”

“The protective qualities work only for a short amount of time, but then fail at odd intervals, amplifying the spells rather than blocking them, an unfortunate accident occurred that brought this to my attention and the individual who allowed this to slip through has been terminated,” said Lucius. “Thankfully I managed to call in a few favors to make sure this incident was left a mystery, but several months of work had been lost thanks to this one incompetent bungler. I rarely allow for such mistakes, it is a disgrace that such mistakes were allowed through. Rest assure that by May or June at the very latest, they will be complete.”

“It is just as well, as that date will fall perfectly within my timetable but fail me again Lucius and the price for failure will be much more than I intend to pay you for your work.” warned Eskara. “And your progress on the girl.”

“My son Draco has befriended her and I managed to gain some information from him, without revealing your intentions,” said Lucius calmly. “The Black child could be problematic, he is rather protective of her, as you know the girl was sent to her Muggle relations, a move that inspired great controversy and he tried to get her removed there by appealing from Dumbledore. The fact is Black is rather protective of the girl’s well being.”

“If he stops me from getting what is mine, I will eliminate him as well,” stated Eskara.

“Mind I ask once again why you are so obsessed with Elizabeth Potter?” asked Lucius, hoping to get into the mind of the vampire queen.

“My reasons are my own and your place is not to know them, but to make sure the robes are prepared,” said Eskara. “Your gold will be delivered once I have the robes and not a second before. My followers will escort you out.”

Lucius was roughly pushed towards the exit by two vampires who were looking at his neck longingly but Eskara shook her head. Few people could just dismiss Lucius, but Eskara had the power to do so. The Ministry had disregarded her as a myth, invented by the vampires to strike terror in the hearts of the Wizarding public but her power was very real. Lucius wondered if he made a huge error entering a partnership with this deadly vampire, as he returned to Malfoy Manor.

Eskara remained, her project becoming visible. She was nearly at the end of the amount of magic she could perform. Strictly speaking, vampires did not have the ability to perform magic, when they had acquired the gift of immortality; they had sacrificed the ability to perform magic to gain it. For that simple reason, Muggles could not be turned into vampires and they were rather killed. The blood of Muggles also did not properly nourish vampires. It took five Muggles to gain the same amount of nourishment of one average powered witch or wizard.

Thanks to her keen mind, Eskara had created a crude, but effective method to utilize the blood of magical individuals beyond nourishment. The artifacts had allowed her to slightly alter the properties of the blood of magical people to allow her the ability to perform magic once she fed off of them. She had a very impressive stock of blood replenishing potions as well that would keep her prey from dying from severe blood loss and nutrient potions to keep them alive. It was difficult to capture anyone who could be fed off of without drawing attention, but fifteen unmarried Muggleborns had been captured for use of her experimenting with this process. After all, they would not be missed by the Ministry. Nine had died in an attempt to perfect the process, and six remained at her disposal.

There was one small drawback. Each magically engineered blood sample had only allowed Eskara to perform magic for a period of two hours. After that, she became weaker than ever and suffered from

severely withdrawal as if she had not fed in days. She needed to constantly feed to maintain her ability to perform magic.

Pulling herself up, Eskara pressed her hand to the wall, revealing a hidden room. Into the next room, where her subjects were shackled to the wall, glassy eyed, with fang marks on their neck. Quickly, Eskara knelt down, straddling a girl of about twenty years old, before she sunk the fangs into the girl's neck. The blood had tasted wonderful and she felt power returning to her fingertips. Withdrawing slowly, licking the girl's neck of excessive blood, Eskara quickly removed a blood replenishing potion and tipped it into the girl's mouth down her throat, preparing her to be fed on again. Turning, Eskara walked off, completely recharged. This temporary measure would have to be improved on soon and she would have power, if Lucius did his job correctly.

-

January had flew by rather quickly for the first years at Hogwarts. Elizabeth could not help but laugh at overhearing Hermione Granger stressing about exams, when they were a little over five months away. The girl would work herself into a coma if she was not careful

"I'm glad that girl wasn't sorted into Ravenclaw," muttered Elizabeth, as she followed Padma and Lisa from the library on Saturday morning, to look up a couple of books to double check their homework. They tried to move through as quickly as they can, not to spend time with Hermione, who seemed to live in the library.

"No, I don't think she would have anyway, she might be dedicated to studying, but has she ever had any thought that wasn't printed in a book?" asked Padma with a frown.

"No," said Elizabeth quickly, the answer was rather obvious.

"And to think people thought she should be sorted into Ravenclaw, that's an insult to our house," added Lisa. "This is the house for creative, smart minds, not people who mindlessly follow everything they read."

"It's almost noon," stated Elizabeth quickly. "I better get going for Neville's tutoring session, I'll catch both of you later."

Padma and Lisa told her bye as Elizabeth made her way down the hallway, passing through a pair of secret passageways that she had discovered through her nighttime wanderings, before making her way down towards the dungeons. Just as she walked towards the dungeons, she saw Neville standing there, looking very uncomfortable and the sight of who had joined him had explained perfectly why.

"What is he doing here?" demanded Elizabeth as she had her eyes fixed on Ron Weasley, who stood there, with a triumphant look on his face. Unfortunately, there appeared to be no way for her to get a restraining order in the Wizarding World, but hexing Ron had seemed to be a viable alternative.

"It's not my fault," said Neville defensively. "I told him that I had to go to my tutoring session with you, you wouldn't like him being here, but he kept following me."

"Actually, I need help, my Potions grade is slipping, Mum's already sent me a howler about it, she threatened to ground me for the entire summer," said Ron. "Neville isn't even melting his cauldron anymore, so maybe you could help me."

"Professor Snape has requested that I help Neville and only Neville, not you," said Elizabeth. "If I helped everyone who struggled in Potions, I would have no free time and that's just in the Gryffindor House."

"Come on Elizabeth, I need help, you're smart and brilliant, surely someone like you could help me" begged Ron and Elizabeth just rolled her eyes, she had never met anyone as pathetic as Ron Weasley. Other than Dudley that is, but Dudley was a whole other category of pathetic.

"Do I need to get Professor Snape?" asked Elizabeth. "He had arranged for me to tutor Neville and I doubt he would be pleased if you had stalled me from doing my job."



"Neville can you talk some sense into her?" asked Ron, who looked alarmed at the prospect of Professor Snape finding out about this.

"No, I think you better leave, before you get hexed again," said Neville, as he knew the temper his tutor had. She had blown up at him when he was late for one of his sessions, because he was not assertive enough to tell Crabbe and Goyle to get out of his way. "Ron, leave."

Ron stood there, but Elizabeth took a couple of steps towards the directly of Snape's office. That gave Ron the properly incentive to bolt as fast as he could from Neville and Elizabeth.

"I'm so bloody glad I wasn't sorted into Gryffindor," said Elizabeth staring at Neville.

"Wait a minute, Gryffindor is not that bad," said Neville.

"No, but between Granger and Weasley, it doesn't look all that attractive," said Elizabeth.

"Just imagine sharing a room with Ron Weasley," said Neville with a shake of his head and Elizabeth's lips twitched into a smile before she motioned for Neville to follow her into the classroom where Neville got started, now finally into the potions they had worked on in class in November. With any luck, hopefully they would be caught up at the end of the year and Neville would be able to stand on his own two feet without her constant tutoring.

Sitting down in an available chair where Neville was in reach, Elizabeth pulled out her mother's diary, to get some quality time reading it. Most of the entries after the summer holidays after her first year had been notes about different modifications of Potions and charms to improve them. It interested Elizabeth, even though she would not know enough to properly understand them right yet.

December 26th 1972:

I can't believe the gall of Petunia. She seems to think it's my fault that she failed her last test in school. That and the fact she seems to be harboring a grudge about the tea cup incident. I apologized many times, it was a bloody accident. Then she threw away my Christmas present, without opening it. Mum and Dad aren't too pleased with her attitude right now, but she'll blame me for this I'm sure. I hope we'll smooth this over, I want my sister back, but the more time goes by, the further we seem to drift apart. I'm trying to find out why I was a witch and she wasn't. Asking around, in most cases, siblings are supposed to be magical, even if they are from Muggle families.

Flipping through, Elizabeth saw more complex notes and it was a while before she saw another diary entry that she could read.

February 27th 1973:

Severus is trying to figure out where Remus Lupin has been going once a month. Quite frankly, I don't think he's telling the truth either, about his mother being sick, either. Unlike Black or Potter, he doesn't seem to be a very good liar. Still, it's really none of his business, but Severus is adamant that he figure out what Lupin's up to. I've written down all the dates that he's left during this year so far, maybe that will shed some light on what's been going on.

March 1st, 1973:

It should have been so obvious. I know the reason now. Going to keep this from Severus, he's been hanging around with Mulciber and Avery for too long, if they get a hold of this, they will use it to blackmail Lupin.

Elizabeth gritted her teeth in frustration. It gave her no further information. The name Severus also popped up occasionally, Elizabeth wondered if it referred to Professor Snape. It seemed a bit far fetched that a Slytherin would befriend a muggleborn witch, but then again, it seemed far fetched to her that two people would be unfortunate enough to be named Severus. She wondered who Remus Lupin was and why he was leaving mysteriously during the time her mother went to Hogwarts. She made a mental note to find out when she had the time.

“Stir that counterclockwise, Neville,” advised Elizabeth, as she looked in on him, and Neville nodded a brief thanks before he went back to his potion.

-

Harry and Draco were in the hallways, both walking back from the Owlery, sending their weekly letters to Ginny and Luna, when a rotund figure stepped in front of them, his abnormally short wand in front of him.

“Yes, Dursley, what do you want?” asked Draco calmly, as he looked at Dudley, who had his fists clenched, staring at Harry.

“The freak thinks she’s an actual person now, she was supposed to come home and make our dinner for Christmas, but Mum had to make it when you invited her to your house,” said Dudley, pulling a face at that memory. “Listen here Black, I’m going to warn you one more time, stop being my cousin’s friend.”

“Ickle Duddydums, I told you, I’m going to be Lizzie’s friend no matter what petty threats you throw at me,” said Harry but Draco turned towards him, a horrified look on his face.

“Ickle Duddydums?” asked Draco, looking completely revolted.

“One of the pet names that this fat load’s mother calls him, Lizzie told me,” said Harry.

“Well, there goes my lunch,” groaned Draco but Dudley was not used to being ignored, as he stood up boldly, getting into Harry’s face. Harry took two steps back, not in fear, but because Dudley was in severe need of a breath mint.

“Listen here, both of you, without your wands, you couldn’t touch me and neither could any of those other Slytherins who keep attacking me,” said Dudley, clenching his fat fists. “Without your wands, you’re nothing.”

“And with your wand, you’re still nothing, Dudders,” said Harry in a bored voice.

“You put those Slytherins up for attacking me, you and my idiot cousin!” shouted Dudley, doing a good impression of his father as his face became a rather pronounced shade of purple.

“Right, Dursley, some first years put a bunch of sixth and seventh years up to attacking you,” said Draco in a bored voice. “Seriously, Dursley, no one likes you, perhaps if you were a little less obnoxious, you might need hexed daily. In fact, in the Slytherin house, you’re the freak, Mudblood.”

“That’s it, I’m making you pay,” said Dudley as he held out his wand and fired a spell. What it was supposed to be, neither Draco nor Harry had any idea, as it threw Dudley backwards. The entire hallway shook as he connected with the wall. He would have been injured, had he not had all that padding back there.

“Well you sure showed us,” stated Harry sarcastically, as he watched Dudley struggle to get to his feet, before turning to Draco. “Lizzie’s tutoring with Longbottom should be about done, we should go there now.”

“Good idea, Harry, providing I don’t have to socialize with Longbottom,” said Draco with some disdain, as Dudley was still struggling to pull himself to his feet, but whatever that backfired spell was had really through his equilibrium off balance. Without even a backward glance, the two first years walked off, leaving Dudley to his own devices as continued his struggle to get to his feet.

-

A trio of vampires dropped down in Diagon Alley. The Alley was mostly deserted due to it being late at night. Their queen had ordered them to pick up an important item from a contact at the Leaky Cauldron. They had been equipped with vials of blood and for some odd reason wands, on the off chance that any vampire hunters would find out where they were. Quickly, they stepped towards the back exit

from the pub, but a regal looking wizard exited the shop had caught the attention of one of the vampires. He had not fed in nearly a day.

“Wait,” whispered one of the vampires as the vampire reached forward, hands extended but quickly an explosion of garlic had knocked the vampire back, as Savannah stepped forward.

“Dumbledore let me go to Diagon Alley to get some supplies, I must say, this is a pleasant bonus,” said Savannah in a gruff voice as he removed a wooden spike, but the other two vampires had raised the vials of blood and drank them. They felt great power, something that they had not felt in many years after receiving the gift of immortality and they held the wands out and a spell blasted Savannah right in the ribs, knocking him backwards. Bouncing back on his feet, Savannah removed a pair of disc shaped object. Tapping his wand to them, they released an intense blast of light. Light that his opponents repelled quickly.

“Power, is what we have now, human,” hissed one of the vampires, blasting Savannah off of his feet. The wizened vampire hunter and Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher performed a variety of attacks but mental alarm bells went off in his head, as he struggled to figure out how these blood sucking demons could perform magic.

“Stand still you blood suckers,” said Savannah but one of the vampires blasted him right through the window of the shop. Glass shattered as Savannah took a nasty hit. One of the vampires stepped forward, enticed by the smell of blood, but the leader of the group grabbed him by the wrist to stop him from feeding.

“No,” grunted the vampire. “We get the Mistress’s package. We leave him for now, no more, no less.”

The vampires walked off, as Savannah laid, racked with pain, with several cracked ribs, a bruised sternum, and sliced up arms. Dumbledore would never let him out of Hogwarts and in fact, he had failed to beat those creatures. Gingerly, he found his wand, healing the damage the best he could, at least enough to get him back to Hogwarts in fair health. It was quite horrifying that those beasts had the ability to perform magic.

At the Ministry of Magic, Cornelius Fudge was about ready to retire to his office for the evening, with a nice large bottle of firewhiskey. Another disturbance at Diagon Alley, a fight between a group of figures, one of them resembling the rogue vampire hunter Jack Savannah. It was unfortunate, Savannah was among the greatest hit wizards that ever lived, but when his wife and two children were killed by vampires, he became slightly unhinged. Fudge had read the file many times, Savannah had made many claims of the mysterious Eskara, someone who surely did not exist. Vampires had been fragmented and until recently, there had not been many attacks in Britain.

Moving forward, Fudge needed to contact Dumbledore, to inform him what his Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher had been up to and demand some answers.

“Dumbledore!” shouted Fudge firmly as he tossed the Floo powder into the fire, kneeling down and sticking his head into the fire.

Dumbledore sat in the office, he had just returned from another Wizengamot session an hour ago and now Fudge wanted him again. Slowly, Dumbledore turned to the Minister, who looked very annoyed. Sighing Dumbledore stooped down to face the Minister of Magic’s head.

“Yes, Cornelius, what can I help you with?” asked Dumbledore.

“Savannah got into another scuffle with vampires in the alley, very lucky no one was injured, he’s getting out of control Dumbledore, I thought you were to keep him in the school and away from these vampires,” said Fudge with a frown and Dumbledore sighed.

“I assured you that I would but I did not see the harm of allowing him into Diagon Alley to collect a few supplies,” said Dumbledore.

“Albus, there was most certainly harm done, he did it again, got into a scuffle in Diagon Alley, my Aurors are cleaning up this mess, that rogue has gone too far, as Minister of Magic, I strongly recommend

you keeping a tighter leash on him,” stated Fudge. “Who knows what he gets into at that school, the students could be in danger.”

“He just teaches, Cornelius, he has done nothing that I have not approved of,” said Dumbledore patiently. “Rest assure that he should be returning right now, if he has not gone off somewhere.”

On cue, Savannah staggered to the door. His arms were crudely wrapped up from where they were sliced and he sat down right in a chair.

“Professor Savannah, what happened?” asked Dumbledore calmly.

“Vampires, stinking blood suckers, they were in Diagon Alley, three of them, managed to give me the slip,” said Savannah gruffly, as his ribs still ached and it would be a miracle if there was not some internal bleeding.

“The Ministry of Magic is handling this, Savannah, you should have contacted the Aurors if you saw anything,” stated Fudge, eyes narrowed towards Savannah from the fire. “As a former hit wizard, you should have known the danger. By leaving it to yourself, you put countless lives in danger.”

“By the time those bunglers had gotten there, they would have fed on everyone in the Alley,” argued Savannah in a passionate voice. “And there is something else the both of you should know.”

“Continue,” encouraged Dumbledore as Fudge just looked on with a stoic expression from the fire.

“They pulled wands on me and performed magic,” stated Savannah crisply and Fudge looked irritated.

“Rubbish, vampires can’t perform magic, considering how obsessed you are with these creatures, you should know that,” said Fudge, not even considering this new discovery as plausible. “Savannah, did it ever occur to you that your vampires might not have been really vampires?”

“Listen here you pencil pusher, I know a vampire when I see one and those things were vampires,” growled Savannah. “The curse of immortality strips them of the ability to perform magic yes, but Eskara has been working to bypass it for years. She’s had her eyes on certain artifacts.”

“What artifacts?” asked Dumbledore, his curiosity piqued.

“Artifacts that could alter the properties of magical blood, giving vampires the ability to perform magic once they feed off of their prey,” said Savannah promptly and Fudge looked very skeptical at this prospect. “I’m telling you Minister, your Aurors need to step up and the Ministry needs to worry less about chasing werewolves and more about the real threats.”

“This Eskara that you talk about is just nothing but an attempt to spread panic,” said Fudge. “A vampire queen, a bit far fetched, a carefully orchestrated myth.”

“The Ministry said the same thing about He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named being a myth at first,” growled Savannah. “And Eskara may be at least as dangerous, if not more so.”

“Enough,” said Fudge firmly. “With all due respect, Albus, I can no longer look the other way and I trust you will not let him out of your sight again. Any further incidents and I will be forced to call in my Aurors to escort him to Azkaban.”

“Of course, Cornelius,” said Dumbledore calmly, looking at Savannah, there was only a few more months left in the year, he was sure he could keep the wizened vampire hunter in line until the year ended and he was forced to find another teacher. “I trust I will be speaking to you soon enough.”

“Yes, good night, Albus,” said Fudge in a tired voice, as Dumbledore turned to Savannah.

“Headmaster, I know what I saw,” protested Savannah and Dumbledore gave a searching look into Savannah’s eye.



“Jack, I believe you,” said Dumbledore in a tired voice. “Eskara is one hundred percent genuine but it’s for the best the world at large that she remains a myth.”

“Oh and what will happen when she enslaves all of humanity?” demanded Savannah.

“A bridge that I pray we never cross,” said Dumbledore calmly, as he looked at Savannah’s arms. “I would highly recommend you go the hospital wing, those gashes look like they could get infected if you’re not careful.”

“Spare me the grandfatherly sentiment, Dumbledore,” replied Savannah gruffly. “All of her attacks are in Britain, she’s never targeted this place much before. She has to be after something here.”

“You know her story better than anyone else, you should have insight into her mind, but Elizabeth Potter is in constant peril from this vampire queen,” said Dumbledore with a twinkle in his eyes. “I hired you to protect her, you must not fail, she is way too important to be compromised and most important of all, Miss Potter must never know her connection to Eskara. It’s for her own safety, she would be susceptible.”

“I know, Dumbledore,” stated Savannah firmly. “If Eskara steps one foot into Hogwarts, I’ll blast the blood sucking bint to dust. I have a score in this too, Azkaban be damned.”

“I do hope you have a better plan than last time you battled Eskara,” said Dumbledore evenly as Savannah covered his eye patch in a significant matter.

“I’m off to the hospital wing, call me if you need me,” grumbled Savannah as he walked off, even more scars of the never ending war he had pledged to fight all those years ago.

Fudge was in his office right now, sighing. Dumbledore had the strange ability to give the Minister all of the information, but in a way that the Minister would have even more questions than before he asked Dumbledore.

“Long night, Minister,” said Lucius Malfoy.

“Good evening, Lucius, what brings you to the Ministry at this late hour?” asked Fudge.

“Business as usual, my robes appear to be right on schedule, a bit more testing, and your Aurors will benefit from them,” stated Lucius smoothly, not even giving one hint that another party would benefit from them even more.

“Good, good, with recent events, my Aurors do need a bit more clearance, those vampire hunters blast first and ask questions later,” said Fudge with an uneasy chuckle. “It’s a shame, most of them have the training to be an asset, but refuse to lend their talents to the Ministry. Illegal technically, but vampires are a rather grey area for protection under our laws.”

“Quite, Minister,” said Lucius. “Savannah might be a loose cannon but if vampires ever should threaten the students of Hogwarts, he would be able to hold them off until more capable hands were called. Also, it would give put you in good graces with the voters.”

“Naturally Lucius, naturally,” replied Fudge with a good natured smile on his face. “Still, he keeps babbling on about this Eskara.”

“As you know Minister merely a myth,” said Lucius calmly. “There may be a group of vampires exploiting her legend however, and it is not something to be taken lightly.”

“No, most certainly not,” agreed Fudge. “I must address the public tomorrow, to lay their concerns to rest about this vampire queen nonsense.”

“I’ll be there, Minister, contact me if you need any help,” said Lucius calmly.

“Of course Lucius, farewell for the evening,” said Fudge as Lucius rose to his feet and left.

Lucius had walked down the hallways, Scrimgeour had been a bit reluctant to continue the testing at first, after the accident. It was a miracle that he resolved this matter quickly or otherwise Eskara would have his blood. The robes were nearly perfected, the features to filter out sunlight no longer clashed with the other defensive features of the robes. It would be a tight squeeze, but they would be completed and Lucius would gain an addition to his already vast fortune that will secure the Malfoy family's status in the Wizarding World for generations to come.

-

Easter had already come and passed and the homework load only increased. Now was the time to worry to begin worrying about exams.

"Eight weeks, no problem, that's about a subject a week right," replied Lisa as they were at the library, purposely moving on the opposite side of the library from Hermione Granger.

"Something like that, right Liz?" asked Padma.

"Yes, pretty sure, let's go with that, yeah," replied Elizabeth in an absent minded voice, as an entire years worth of lessons swirled into her mind. "Let's start with History of Magic, I guess, that's where I remember the least."

"Well what do you remember?" asked Lisa. "All I remember is a bunch of goblin rebellions and drifting off to sleep."

"Yeah, that pretty much is what Binns teaches, goblin rebellions and falling off to sleep," replied Harry, as he followed Draco over. "Just read the book, you'll be fine."

"I'm not fine, if I don't pass this year, I can't come back, you know that, Harry," said Elizabeth in a fretful voice.

"You'll do fine Lizzie," encouraged Harry. "I can't really tell you that you're the smartest person in the year, because it varies but you're among the top five."

“Just worried about returning there, I knew this year was too good to be true,” muttered Elizabeth but Harry had put a note into her hand. Elizabeth unfolded it.

“Talk to me later in private. There are things you need to know before the Summer holidays.”

“Liz, let’s face it, there is no way possible you can fail, even if you don’t study another second,” said Lisa. “Besides, if anyone’s going to get kicked out for failing their exams, it’s your cousin.”

“Yes, Dudley’s never done well on tests,” said Elizabeth, her spirits brightened at the prospect of Dudley being kicked out of Hogwarts. He never really deserved to perform magic anyway and even if by some miracle he passed, Elizabeth wondered if Dudley would even want to return. It was a bit of a surprise that he came back after the Christmas holidays, given the fact that no one wanted him there. In truth, her momentarily fear had nothing to do with a lack of confidence, but rather a fear of having to return to the Dursleys forever and never see her friends again. It was silly, but the fact the end of the year was approaching depressed the Girl-Who-Lived only slightly.

“Crabbe and Goyle will only pass and go onto the second year because Father’s insisted I guide them through,” said Draco lightly. “Otherwise they would fail and since Dursley has no one that would help him, he doesn’t have a hope of staying.”

“So, see, there’s a light at the end of the tunnel,” said Lisa as the group of the five first years went back to preparing for their exams, at a leisurely pace. They had plenty of time to make sure they remembered everything that they had learned over the first year.

As Harry had suggested, Elizabeth had met him in the corridors in private. Harry stood there, a serious expression on her face, as he surveyed the expression on Elizabeth’s face.

“You don’t want to go back there,” said Harry and Elizabeth just stood there. “If I’m right, your life at the Dursleys wasn’t exactly all that pleasant.”

"Well, that's putting it mildly," replied Elizabeth as she sighed. "You've seen Dudley, he's the worst of both Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon, especially Uncle Vernon and their worst could pretty bad."

"I figured as much," said Harry. "If it was possible, you would come straight home with me for the summer, but according to the Ministry, your official guardians are the Dursleys and you have to go back."

"My parents put me there," replied Elizabeth a tone of bitterness in her voice and Harry just stared at her for a few seconds, this was a piece of interesting news.

"No, they didn't, in fact, no one knows where they wanted you to go, other than Sirius was your godfather, but he was killed," said Harry and Elizabeth stood, all these years, she had thought her mother and father were the one's that forced her to live with her hated relatives, but it was not there call.

"The Dursleys, I hate them all, they made me think my parents were the one's that sent me there!" cried Elizabeth. "They know, don't they?"

"Yes," said Harry taking a step back, just in case there was any accidental magic. "Mum is Sirius's cousin and she's been working to get you away from there for years, but the Ministry blocked every attempt to have you checked on at the Dursleys. According to Dumbledore, there is a reason why you're being sent there, but he refuses to tell Mum what it is."

"Dumbledore, what right does he have? He's just the Headmaster of Hogwarts!" demanded Elizabeth.

"He has other positions of power, most notably the Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot," said Harry. "I don't know why he would send you there, what the point of it would be."

"Once exams are over, I'll ask, he has to tell me, this is my life he's messing with," said Elizabeth firmly. "I'll tell him everything if I have to, but there is no way I'm going back to the Dursleys if I can help it!"

"That makes two of us, Lizzie, good luck trying to make him see that the Dursleys aren't the best place for you, Mum's been trying for ten years, but Dumbledore refuses to budge and the Ministry aren't about to stand on his toes with this," said Harry as he placed his hand on his forehead. "Let's worry about exams right now, then we'll figure out a way to make Dumbledore see the truth."

"I know Harry, I understand," said Elizabeth but at that moment, Hermione Granger was walking down the hallway, in a huff.

"I can't believe the gall of you, Elizabeth Potter!" shouted Hermione. "I saw you and your friends in the library, laughing at your cousin, because he's struggling in school. Of course he's not pleasant, but you should help him. He is your cousin."

"Only by blood," replied Elizabeth crisply. "I don't see what business it is of yours, Granger. Don't you have a book to go serenade or something?"

"Listen, don't you care one bit that your cousin's future might be ruined if he fails all his exams?" asked Hermione.

"No," said Elizabeth without even thinking about it.

"You can't very well ruin what's not there," added Harry as Hermione folded her arms, looking irritated.

"Okay, Granger, you go and live with Dudley for ten years and see how much you want to help him," said Elizabeth. "No one likes him anyway, quite frankly I am doing him a favor by not helping him. If I really wanted to wish him harm, I'd help him pass his exams. Then he'd be dead by his second year."

Hermione just turned her back and stormed off, muttering under her breath.

"I don't think she has quite forgiven you for being able to learn about magic without meticulously studying a textbook," replied Harry. "Sadly, she'll probably pass all of her exams and she'll be here next year."

“Unfortunately,” said Elizabeth but her mind was still on Dumbledore. She had seen the Headmaster many times, but had never interacted with him at all. He had always come across as a nice, kindly, grandfatherly figure, but appearances could be quite deceiving. People that she thought could help her with the Dursleys had turned out to just get her in even more trouble. Still, Dumbledore could not ignore the facts given from her own experiences, could he? After all, it was his responsibility as Headmaster of Hogwarts to offer support to the students.

-

Lucius took a few steps down the hallway once again, looking from side to side. Once again, he had no idea where he was going or how he could get down. Quickly, he turned to a side chamber, where Eskara sat with a cold indifferent expression.

“The time is up Lucius, the robes now,” ordered Eskara.

“Just perfected yesterday, but have a look at them for yourself,” said Lucius, as he enlarged a box, before putting them into the hands of Eskara. Eskara opened the top of the box, peering into it intently. To the untrained eye and even most trained eyes, they were nothing but common robes. They were charmed to protect against most magical attacks, along with climate control and offered protection against the very bane of her existence, sunlight. “The best robe is at the top, I trust you will make use of it for yourself.”

“Astute for a human,” said Eskara in a chilling tone of voice as she looked at the top robe, it was perfect. She could feel the power. It would make her untouchable.

“Now, just the matter of my fee,” said Lucius. “I lived up to my end of the agreement, now yours if you please. The gold, all one million galleons that you promised.”

“Our deal has not been completed, your gold hinges on our success in securing Elizabeth Potter, in addition the robes” said Eskara. “Remember, you are to arrange the Minister’s meeting with

Dumbledore at the time that I appointed, to draw him away from Hogwarts. My followers will do the rest and fail, and you will lose a lot more than gold.”

“I know what you require and you will not be disappointed,” said Lucius.

“I had best not be,” said Eskara swiftly. “Farewell, Malfoy. The next time we meet, either I will pay or you will.”



## Chapter Seven: Into the Night:

Ignorant to any outside occurrences, the first years and also, the rest of the school had prepared to begin their exams. As the time ticked down, individuals who did not start studying before Easter when the workload had increased were panicking as they tried to cram as much information into their brains. The smarter individuals who allowed themselves plenty of time to study slowed down their study efforts to a mere crawl.

“It’s good that we started early, gives us time to slow down,” commented Elizabeth a few days before the exams, knowing from experience that attempting to study closer to the test did in fact increase the possibility of forgetting important information.

“True,” agreed Lisa as she watched in amusement across the library. Hermione Granger had started studying for the exams before anyone else and had continued to appear to be mindlessly studying up into the wire. “Should we tell her that it might not be a good idea for her to keep studying?”

“She wouldn’t listen to us anyway,” said Padma calmly, as Hermione had about ten books sprawled in front of her. “She’s going to end up working herself into hysteria.”

“Good, it’s the only way she’ll ever learn,” replied Harry, who had just arrived with Draco. “I don’t think there is anything that they can throw at us that we haven’t really studied.”

“There better not be, as many books as we went through and the hours too,” said Draco, who had been obviously encouraged by his father to get the highest marks, if he hoped for his future to be worth anything. He could stomach being surpassed in marks by Harry and Elizabeth, but he was damned if he was going to let Granger surpass him. She had no proper feeling for magic, mindlessly studying book after book, thinking she knew something.

“We’ll be fine,” said Elizabeth.

“So says you, Miss I Freaked Out About the Possibility of Failing,” replied Draco which Elizabeth responded by sticking out her tongue. “Oh, that was really mature.”

“I’m eleven, almost twelve, I’m not supposed to be mature,” responded Elizabeth with a shrug, as she leaned back. “Let’s get out of the library, somewhere where we can relax and not be reminded by the horrifying fact that we do have exams.”

“Too many people freaking out about not having enough time to study anyway,” replied Draco as the five first years left, as the exams continued to approach.

The exams were just as they expected them to be, long, tedious, full of theory, with some practical applications, first years from all four houses took them simultaneously. The theory was mindlessly boring, had she not studied, Elizabeth would have forgotten most of it, as it did her no good with the way she saw magic. Transfiguration and Charms were among the areas that had the most theory, question after question over proper wand movements for rudimentary spells. Once the hour was up, the amount of information that she had to recall off hand dizzied Elizabeth. Making a pineapple tap dance and turning a mouse into a snuffbox were just easy procedures that the Girl-Who-Lived could do in her sleep.

The Potions exam pretty straight forward, considering all they had to do was remember how to brew a Forgetfulness Potion. Once again, nothing that was too difficult, Snape hovered over them, but Elizabeth could not help to notice that Neville had only flinched slightly when Snape had come up to him. However, this appeared to not affect his performance in any way possible. Corking the sample, they brought them up to Snape’s desk at the end of the period.

Defense Against the Dark Arts was just basically a demonstration on what they had learned. They had to fire off as many spells they could remember in a period of sixty seconds at a practice dummy that Savannah had put in front of the room. Some of them blanked when put on the spot, only managing a few spells. Dudley had managed none, even Crabbe and Goyle had managed a couple.

Herbology and Astronomy was nothing special. Just a review of what they had learned on the year about the various magical plants and the stars. It was just a matter of recalling the information from the textbook and answering the questions properly. The final exam was with History of Magic, how Professor Binns managed to come up with one hundred questions on just goblin rebellions was a mystery. Still at the end of the hour, everyone breathed a sigh of relief, until they received their grades that was.

“Over finally,” said Elizabeth, more to herself than to the others, as they exited the History of Magic final exam.

“Until next year,” amended Draco in a bored voice from behind. “I think I did sufficient enough.”

“If I see another question even mentioning a goblin ever again, it will be too soon, too many goblin rebellions for my liking,” said Lisa.

“Well to be fair, that’s all we learned,” said Padma. “I don’t know why we’ve never gotten another History of Magic teacher, I mean, in the centuries he’s been here, there had to have been complains.”

“It’s Dumbledore,” offered Draco as if this explanation solved everything and Elizabeth was just reminded of the fact that she needed to see Dumbledore about her situation at the Dursleys. Harry seemed to have sensed her thoughts and waited for the others to get a bit ahead, before he motioned her over.

“We’ll do this together first thing tomorrow morning, after breakfast, I promise Lizzie,” replied Harry, who hoped that the both of them could convince Dumbledore about the error in his way. Elizabeth nodded in agreement, Harry could see the glimmer of hope in her eye that she might never see the Dursleys in. Even though he was still trying to figure out how to best tell her that they were really twins, Harry wanted to help her in any way necessary. Perhaps in time, he would reveal the secret, but right now, something in Harry was holding back, doubting that Elizabeth would even believe him if he told her.

Albus Dumbledore sat in the office, making sure all of his affairs were in order. The exams were completed, so he suspected the students would be in a restful state, wanting to gain some sleep after the events of the past week or so. As Minerva entered the office, Dumbledore looked up towards her.

“Ah, Minerva, good, I had feared you would already have turned in for the night, Cornelius sent me an urgent letter earlier today, the meeting we intended to have tomorrow morning had been pushed up to tonight, he has other business that would conflict with that meeting time,” remarked Dumbledore with a sigh, a part of him wished that Cornelius would learn to stand on his own two feet and not constantly ask Dumbledore for advice every two minutes. On second thought, there had been members of Cornelius’s office that had checkered pasts. While Dumbledore never judged people too harshly, it would be foolish of him not to be apprehensive of individuals such as Lucius Malfoy and Dolores Umbridge. “So the castle can be left in your capable hands for tonight.”

“Headmaster, do not worry, I am sure I can manage the school for a few hours,” replied Minerva calmly. “Do run off, I would hate the Minister to get lost without your guidance.”

“Of course, I doubt the chances of anything that would threaten the students of the school happening would be miniscule at best,” said Dumbledore, before he left, entering the fireplace, before he flooed straight to the Minister’s office, leaving Minerva to excuse herself from the Headmaster’s office.

The Ravenclaw first year girl’s dormitory was normally a rather quiet and peaceful place. All of the girls got along in relative harmony, having just used it to sleep at night, spending most of their time in the Common Room. At this time, a young, quiet girl named Su Li rose from her sleep to get a glass of water. Stepping forward, she saw a shadow of a creature with wings outside the door. Pulling open the curtain, she became face to face, with a giant vampire bat, with blood shot eyes and fangs. It bared its fangs at her, causing the girl to back off slightly, giving a small scream uncharacteristic to her quiet nature.

The shriek had woken up the other first year girls.

“IT’S A GIANT BAT!” screamed one of the girls, losing her head completely, as she backed off. Elizabeth rubbed her eyes, yawning, before she saw the creature. How it got into the dormitory was interesting, but the fact that all of her dorm mates, being eleven and twelve year old girls, were freaking out, mandated that someone attempted to restore order.

“Everyone stay...” started Elizabeth but a few more screams cut her off as the bat circled around, before morphing into an imposing looking man with broad shoulders and a chalk white face. He also had ice cold blue eyes and fangs. This had done nothing to quell the fears of the girls, they screamed.

“Elizabeth Potter!” rasped the vampire, fangs bared, before it turned around, throwing itself towards the Girl-Who-Lived. Elizabeth reached towards her wand, it was much unfortunate that she could not grab a hold of it, as the vampire roughly grabbed her by the wrist, nearly breaking it with her impressive grip.

“Phoebus Lumos!” shouted Padma, who managed to calm herself long enough to sent out the simulated light spell that Professor Savannah had taught them. The bright orange light had struck the vampire in the face, causing it to shriek slightly, before he raised its hand, back handing the first year Ravenclaw, knocking her unconscious with intense streak. He looked down, hungrily at her neck, but quickly grabbing Elizabeth, forearm wrapped around the throat, before making its way towards the window, before anymore can attack them. A few more Ravenclaw girls from other years had made their way up the stairs, before they looked widened, as they saw, the vampire have a firm grip on the Girl-Who-Lived. Quickly, it threw open the window, climbing to the ledge.

“Are you crazy? You’ll kill us both!” cried Elizabeth in a slightly fearful voice, as the vampire held her, not responding, before it leapt from the window. Elizabeth screwed her eyes shut, expecting a fatal freefall, but the vampire glided in mid air, a firm grip held on Elizabeth.

She did not struggle, in case she fell, as the creature moved into the night, to an unknown destination.

“Everyone calm down!” yelled the fifth year Ravenclaw prefect, Penelope Clearwater trying to take command of the situation to calm the girls down, the first prefect on the scene.

“They have Liz,” said Lisa eyes widened, ashamed that she was unable to do anything and now her other friend was unconscious on the floor as well.

“They have the Girl-Who-Lived!” exclaimed another prefect, a seventh year, who had just arrived on the scene.

“Yes, I saw that man dive out the window with her,” said another girl, a second year by the looks of her.

“That was no man, that was a vampire!” shouted a fourth year, rolling her eyes. “Did you see the fangs on him?”

“Keep an eye on them,” stated the seventh year prefect to Penelope who nodded, before she averted her eyes down to Padma. “I’m going to get her straight to the Hospital Wing and tell Professor Flitwick about this.”

Professor Jack Savannah was right in front of the entrance to the Ravenclaw dormitories, growling in irritation. These stupid riddles that they needed to solve to allow entry would be the end of them all. His vampire detectors were going insane earlier and they pointed to the Ravenclaw Common Room.

“Come on, you stupid thing, open up!” shouted Savannah, losing his patience with the guardian.

“Sorry, that is not the correct answer, you have been denied entrance to the Ravenclaw Common Room,” said the guardian calmly as Savannah just gritted his teeth. He would get in the only way he knew how, by blasting the wall open. Before he could properly get

into position, the seventh year prefect exited the Common Room, with Padma levitated slightly above her.

“Professor Savannah, thank goodness you’re here, vampire in the Common Room,” stated the prefect but Savannah raised his hands, to check on Padma. Quickly, he examined her, checking for any signs that the vampire had decided to help itself to a free meal.

“No fang marks, so the creature did not feed, take her to the hospital wing, she should be fine in a few hours,” stated Savannah gruffly and the prefect nodded. “It got away, I take it.”

“Yes, and it captured Elizabeth Potter,” reported the prefect, trying to remain calm but horror appeared in the eyes of Savannah, as he pushed his way toward.

“Perfect night to have your little tea party with Fudge, Dumbledore,” muttered Savannah as he moved forward towards the first year Ravenclaw girls dormitory. As a teacher, he had the ability to properly move upstairs. Quickly, he moved forward, as the terrified girls were clouding around. “Clear out, I need to investigate the area!”

The girls quickly bolted out, Savannah hoped that they did not tamper with any evidence. Quickly, he searched around, moving towards the bed of Elizabeth Potter, seeing a lone hair. A keen eye and experience had told Savannah that this hair was not of something that was human and could be used to track the vampire that captured the Girl-Who-Lived. Pocketing it, Savannah moved forward towards his office. Supplies would need to be collected.

He nearly ran into Harry who had stood outside of the dormitory, a worried look on his face. It took Savannah about a half of a minute to register Harry standing there.

“Black, what are you doing up at this ungodly hour?” questioned Savannah through a narrowed eye.

“Something happened to Lizzie,” said Harry urgently and Savannah just stared at him, wondering how he would know. “I heard the screams when I was returning a book to the library, I decided to take a closer look and it was about as I feared, isn’t it?”

“Black, yes, she is missing,” stated Savannah and Harry moved forward, but the vampire hunter shook his head. “No, absolutely not, Dumbledore would have my head if something happened to another student. Hunting vampires is a dangerous business, Black, best left for a professional. I would suggest you go to bed, the longer you stand here, the longer that you jeopardize your friend’s life.”

“If she’s missing, I need to help her, surely there is something that I can do to help,” argued Harry and Savannah just looked at him, before nodding.

“Owl Dumbledore, tell him what he feared may be happening, that’s all you need to know,” grunted Savannah as he walked off towards his office to collect a few necessary precautions, before another loud beep had echoed from one of his vampire hunters, causing Savannah to stop in his tracks. “Damn it, not another one, this time in the Slytherin first year boy’s dormitory.”

Harry already was walking, he would owl Dumbledore alright, but he would also do what he could to help. He was not going to let anything harm his twin. Savannah, he sort of trusted to be capable, but if this was left in the hands of Dumbledore, Harry was suspect at how safe Elizabeth would be. After all, Dumbledore had already proven himself to be a dismal failure regarding Elizabeth’s well being in Harry’s eyes because of the Dursleys and he did not trust Dumbledore at all.

Another vampire dropped down, before he ripped open the curtains to the first year boys dormitory.

“The one called Draco Malfoy, the Mistress requires him,” declared the vampire blandly.

“Malfoy, he’s right there!” yelled Dudley fearfully at the creature, as he pointed to Draco with both of his pudgy hands. Draco winced as



Crabbe and Goyle looked at each other stupidly, the other boys in numb shock. Quickly, the vampire reached forward, grabbing Draco by the throat.

“Let go of me you stupid creature!” yelled Draco, but the vampire moved forward. Another group of boys had made their way up the stairs, curiously. None of them had the intention to save Draco, it was not the way of the Slytherin house. Rather it was just a means to see what they were up against. They quickly made a path for the vampire as it made its way towards the portrait hole. As it swung open the portrait hole, it was met by a man holding a wand.

“What is the meaning of this?” demanded Snape, who had just shown up before he stared the vampire down. “Put the boy back, now or suffer the consequences.”

“The Mistress requires him,” stated the vampire, as Snape shot thick ropes from his wand, wrapping around the vampire. The vampire quickly used its strength to break free, but this left it susceptible to a series of attacks from Snape. Snape was no expert on vampires but he knew enough to keep the beast at bay until Savannah arrived to do his job.

“Leave, Mr. Malfoy!” demanded Snape and Draco moved forward, but the vampire had enough of Snape, reaching forward, pulling the wand from Snape’s hand, before bringing the Head of the Slytherin House to the ground. The vampire bared its fangs, preparing to sink them into the neck of Snape, to feed off of his blood.

“Back from him, now!” shouted Savannah, as he moved forward, throw a pair of garlic bombs to the ground. They exploded, causing the vampire to suffocate on their fumes. Quickly, Savannah moved in for the kill, raising the wooden stake. With expert precision, he jammed it right into the chest of the vampire. Impacting the heart, the vampire crumbled to dust, right before his eyes. Snape pulled himself up, reclaiming his wand.

“It took you long enough, Savannah,” said Snape sourly.

“You’re welcome, Snape,” replied Savannah with a grunt. “You tend to your students, I need to track down some vampires and quickly, who were they after?”

“Draco Malfoy,” stated Snape quickly before he looked around, realizing that Draco was nowhere to be seen. “Where did they boy get off to?”

A terrified cry of help could be heard at the end of the hallway. Both Snape and Savannah moved towards the hallway, but another vampire had apparently breached the security of Hogwarts. She grabbed Draco, holding him firmly, throwing his wand off to the side as he tried to use it on him, before moving towards an open window. Snape tried to use his wand to close it but it was too late. The vampire exited Hogwarts, before she gained altitude, with the captured Draco Malfoy dangling dangerously below the ground, as it moved off high above through the night.

“You’re supposed to be the vampire hunter, yet you let a student get captured by one,” said Snape in an accusing tone of voice. “One of my Slytherins as well, no excuse for this, Dumbledore will be informed for you not doing your job properly.”

“Second student tonight, actually, Potter was taken from her dormitory as well,” said Savannah and Snape looked away for a brief second, before his eyes snapped back to Savannah, with an emotionless look in them, as he faced the Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher.

“Find her or Dumbledore will have both of our heads,” said Snape without blinking. “I will write a letter to Lucius Malfoy, to inform him that you allowed his son to be kidnapped from Hogwarts.”

Savannah just balled up his fists, before he turned his back, moving off towards the exit of Hogwarts. With the hair he found in the first year Ravenclaw girl’s dormitory, he would be able to track the creature. They could not have gotten all that far, Savannah was ready to blast the creatures first and never ask questions.

Harry had just sent the owl off to Dumbledore and was outside of Savannah's office, looking for something he could use to help Elizabeth. Much to his frustration, it appeared Savannah did not leave even the slightest bit of garlic that could be used against these powerful enemies. Putting a hand to his forehead, Harry was in deep thought, to determine the best way to tackle the vampires. They did have weaknesses, the extreme vulnerability to light and heat as well.

Harry moved back to his dormitories, careful not to meet Filch or any of the prefects. He had a few items that could be of use. He was planning on using them on Dudley if he had stepped one toe out of line, but with a bit of planning, he could use them to help. A side trip to the kitchen would not be out of the question. Every second he remained inside the school, was a second that his sister was left in danger from vampires.

Quickly after he had gotten what he needed from the dormitories, Harry stopped cold, another problem came to mind, something that could pose a problem. He had no idea where those creatures had taken Elizabeth in the first place, so his plans to save her appeared to be lost. Still, despite that, he refused to give up.

"Think, Harry, if you were a blood sucking vampire, where would you hide?" muttered Harry to himself, as he entered the dormitories, racking his brain for the answer, but he stopped. "Dora said there were mountains on the side of Hogsmeade, caves, they would be dark and cold, of course, perfect for vampires to go, but getting up there will be a problem, not to mention sneaking into the village."

It hit Harry. Once he made one final quick trip to the kitchens, he knew exactly how to get up there. He would be leaving so much to chance, but he would not lose her, not after he found her again.

Inside the cave, Eskara looked as the two eleven year olds were secured by chains. The vampire queen looked forward, looking at her minions, before she examined Elizabeth's neck closely. The girl was still passed out and the boy was not much better off. Eskara stepped back, before nodding.

“She passes inspection, if you had used her to get a free meal, you would not be fit to suck the blood from a flobberworm by the time I was through with you,” said Eskara coldly to the vampire after finding no fang marks, who bowed before the queen. “Up to your feet now, and return to your station. Savannah is bound to track us here. Obsession knows no limits and his is greater than any other mortal I have previously encounter.”

“Yes Mistress,” said the vampires in a monotone, as Eskara moved off into the cave for a moment, she did not trust that everything was in order. At that second, Draco’s eyes flickered open, as he felt dazed and confused, it took in a few seconds to realize what had happened.

“Potter,” hissed Draco underneath his breath, careful not to incur the wrath of these dark creatures “Elizabeth! Wake up!”

“Not now Aunt Petunia,” muttered Elizabeth shaking her head, before her eyes flickered open. “Wait, Draco, they’ve got you too.”

“Very good, no wonder they put you in Ravenclaw,” said Draco with a roll of his eyes, before straightening up. “Vampires, that nutcase Savannah was supposed to protect us all and now both of us are here, captured, who knows how many people at Hogwarts they’ve fed on. I don’t know what they could want with me, you I can see, but why would they capture me?”

“It’s not your natural charm, I can tell you that much,” replied Elizabeth as she looked around. “Here’s a problem, I don’t have my wand, so there’s no way for us to get out of here.”

“Well, I don’t either, so we’re stuck, until someone comes to rescue us, if someone comes to rescue us,” stated Draco, as he tried to struggle against his restraints. “No good, there’s no give, I doubt even that oafish gamekeeper could break these.”

“Stuck, how humiliating, a damsel in distress,” said Elizabeth in despair as she tried to pull herself free from the restraints, but footsteps had allowed her pause.

“Excellent, you’re awake,” said Eskara as she stepped forward, peering at Elizabeth with a calm, collected expression, looking at her, intently studying her. “Elizabeth Potter, the Girl-Who-Lived, such potential, I have been looking forward to meeting you for sometime, more than you could ever realize.”

“Listen here, vampire, you have her, what could you want with me?” demanded Draco as Eskara turned slightly. “I want some answers and I want them now, do you hear me! What do you want with me.”

“You, child, are merely collateral,” said Eskara cryptically in a chilling tone of voice. “Bringing Elizabeth to my makeshift lair was the true objective for tonight, but you are going to secure that I get something else that I have been having my eyes on for quite some time.”

“What do you mean?” demanded Draco. “I think the plasma must be going to your head if you think you’ll get away with this, when Father finds out...”

Eskara angrily smacked Draco right across the face. Had she hit him any harder, it would have dislocated the boy’s jaw. Draco massaged his jaw, unable to say anything for the moment.

“Arrogant little boys should rarely be seen and never heard,” said Eskara, with a feral grin, before she put a hand to her forehead, feeling rather flushed for a moment. She staggered, but firmly grabbed the wall for leverage, before reaching into the pocket of her robes. A vial of blood later was drunk and Eskara looked at them, more fit then ever.

“Look, what do you want, I’ve never met you in my life, did you work for Voldemort?” asked Elizabeth and Eskara looked rather offended at the thought of placing herself in servitude to Voldemort.

“Please, do not insult me, Elizabeth, working for that foolish wizard, as if,” said Eskara with a calm expression on her face. “As for the reasons of our meeting, well, sit back and be patient, everything will

be told to you in short order. Right now, I'll leave you two together, I have an important message I need to communicate.

Eskara stepped off, as Draco looked towards Elizabeth.

"Obvious what she's doing, she's going to ransom us both off," said Draco. "Father will have her head on a platter when he finds out what she's done."

"I don't know, something tells me this is a bit more than gold," said Elizabeth skeptically, truthfully, something about this vampire seemed to be strange, yet a bit familiar. It was odd in that sense.

Eskara stepped forward, before she activated the method of contact that she had connected directly to Lucius Malfoy.

"Eskara, are you calling me to arrange the payment of my gold?" asked Lucius from the other end of the communication link but Eskara just laughed in amusement.

"Please, Lucius, I have something a bit more valuable to you than gold right here," said Eskara smoothly. "The legacy of the Malfoy family hangs in the balance, unless you cooperate with me."

"What are you talking about, vampire?" demanded Lucius.

"I'll stand by for a couple of moments, because if my theory is correct and mostly it usual is, you should be receiving a letter right about now that will state that your son has been kidnapped from Hogwarts, by vampires," said Eskara calmly and Lucius gave an anguished yell on the other end of the communication link. "Yes, it does hurt to get someone taken away from you, just like when your half blooded Master took someone away from me."

"What are you talking about?" demanded Lucius. "Return my son, now."

"Oh, are you missing him Lucius?" asked Eskara with a cold laugh. "Maybe I should give him back, eleven years of your life wasted,

training up an heir to carry up your hypocritical legacy. Such a shame if something were to happen to him.”

“Draco never did anything to you, in fact, I jeopardized my position with the Minister of Magic just to make this deal with you, a deal that would eliminate the greatest threat to blood purity,” said Lucius.

“I don’t find myself interested in your blood, except when it is time for me to feed,” replied Eskara. “Pureblood, half-blood, Mudblood, makes no difference to me, all tastes the same. Give me a good reason why I should not make your son suffer for your sins.”

“Name your price, Eskara,” said Lucius in a tired voice.

“Finally, we understand each other,” stated Eskara. “I want the Malfoy family fortune, the properties, the gold, the artifacts, everything but the robes off your back and the wand in your hand.”

“You want my entire fortune?” demanded Lucius, his calm voice laced with horror, as the ramifications hit him. “I’ll be ruined!”

“That was the point, Malfoy,” replied Eskara coldly. “You talked your way out of Azkaban. You are not talking your way out of this punishment. But, if you refuse, I may still send your son back. However, it will be in several pieces.”

“Fine,” said Lucius in a defeated tone of voice. “I will make the proper arrangements to have all of my gold placed into your account within the next twenty four hours.”

“You have eight,” replied Eskara in a chilling tone of voice. “I will be in touch.”

In the other end of the cave, Elizabeth and Draco remained shackled to the wall, ignorant with what the vampire was saying, all they knew that they needed to find a way out.

“Where is that bloody vampire hunter?” asked Draco in an agitated voice as he attempted to find a way to break the chains, but Elizabeth

was wildly shaking her head from side to side. "Mind I ask what you hope to accomplish doing that?"

"I'm escaping," replied Elizabeth and Draco looked skeptical, but she dislodged a hair pin. Using her quick reflexes that were created due to years of avoiding Dudley and his gang, she caught the hair pin, before beginning to pick the locks on the shackles. With precision, she managed to get both her arms and legs free. Draco looked at her, widened eyes, almost shocked that this plan actually worked. "Muggle trick, you should learn it."

"I'll stick with wands," said Draco stubbornly, as Elizabeth quickly freed Draco. Any minute, she would come back, they needed to work quickly. "Hurry it up. We need to escape before she comes back."

"I know," hissed Elizabeth through clenched teeth as she managed to get Draco free, at the cost of damaging her hair pin. Quickly a loud explosion echoed from outside and they two first years exchanged looks, they both had no question who was outside.

"Now, he's here," said Draco in disgust, as Elizabeth looked around, ignoring the attacks from outside. "What took him so long?"

"Help me move this, I think we might have a way out," said Elizabeth, pointing forward and Draco looked at the boulder, it looked filthy, but with no wands they had no choice. As quickly as they managed, they shifted the rock, to try and reveal their way to freedom.

Outside, Savannah moved himself up the rocks. It was obvious that the vampire would have taken her prisoners towards that cave at the top. If he remembered correctly, it was large and spacious. It was a perfect hide out for vampires, he had warned Dumbledore that it might be a problem area, but Dumbledore declined allowing Savannah to set up monitoring spells. Dumbledore thought it might be a temptation for Savannah to constantly have excuses to sneak out of the castle, at a pretext of movement from the village.

At that moment, two of Eskara's minions dove right towards Savannah. Quickly, he pulled out a small staff, before pulling on it. It



released a net, coated with garlic, wrapping up one of the vampires. Quickly, the vampire dove at Savannah but Savannah grabbed the vampire. A garlic bomb broke open, connecting with the vampire's skin. The vampire staggered, allowing Savannah to reach into his bag, before he removed a disc shaped object. Tapping his wand towards it, he placed it on the forehead of the vampire. The dark creature grabbed at the object, but it exploded, releasing a large blast of light. The vampire shrieked, the light burning its skin, as it fell to its knees. The face was completely burned but oddly enough, its body was unaffected.

Moving inside the cave, Savannah moved over, throwing more garlic bombs into the air, backing the vampires off. Quickly, Savannah moved forward, seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, but Eskara moved forward.

"You, I've been waiting for this for a long time!" shouted Savannah, raising his wand, but a quartet of bats dropped down, morphing into vampires, but they grabbed Savannah by the shoulders, holding him, his wand slipping from his grip as well. Savannah tried to ram them into the rocks, fighting, attempting to reach for something to use, just barely pulling out the first thing he could reach before the vampire queen moved over. Eskara held up a collar, before she snapped it around the neck of Savannah.

"You could do magic, but I wouldn't recommend it, the pain would be inhumane" said Eskara viciously, as Savannah growled, before she removed an object from Savannah's hand, while kicking his bag off to the side, out of reach, as Savannah continued to fight his captures with all he was worth. "Really, a wooden dagger? Did you honestly expect that I would not have prepared for that simple attack?"

"You blood thirsty bitch, I'll rip you limb from limb with my bare hands," stated Savannah, as he attempted to rip himself away from the vampires, but without his weapons or wand, he was useless.

“There that’s the way out,” muttered Elizabeth under her breath, as she looked towards the opening. “Might be a bit tight, but if we crawl out that way, we should be able to get out easily.”

“Wait crawl out, through there over all that dirt and insects, these robes cost more than your cousin eats in a year,” protected Draco and Elizabeth just rolled her eyes, sighing.

“Fine, if you want to act like such a girl, you can stay here and face the vampires by yourself!” snapped Elizabeth, as she knelt down, beginning to crawl through the opening. Draco looked down, closing his eyes, before he made his way right behind Elizabeth, prodded by the second of approaching footsteps, following his fellow first year through the exit, not knowing where it would lead them, but they hoped it would be better than this place.

“Exactly how much further do we have to go,” hissed Draco under his breath, as he looked down at his dirty hands.

“I think just a bit further,” replied Elizabeth calmly, as she reached the end. It looked to be a long drop, but there was a ledge that they could maneuver themselves onto.

“Good, who knows what filth is in this tunnel,” commented Draco, as he watched Elizabeth move out of the tunnel.

“First step can be tricky, watch it,” advised Elizabeth. “Maneuver yourself onto the ledge quickly, but be careful.”

“Right, maneuver myself, be careful, got you,” replied Draco but at that moment, they turned, where a trio of vampires had stood in front of them, baring their fangs at them.

“The Mistress will not be pleased,” said one of the vampires in a blank, toneless voice. “Grab them.”

Quickly, the three vampires dove right towards Elizabeth and Draco. Elizabeth attempted to kick her would be kidnapper in the shin, but this did not work out to her liking. They also had little room to escape,

due to the uneven rocks. The vampires had recaptured the two first years, who could not properly fight them off without his wand. Concentrating hard, Elizabeth remembered reading about wandless magic, but disregarded the possibility. She was only a first year, and the elementary spells that she might be able to perform without a wand would barely be able to even make a vampire blink.

The vampires launched themselves off of the ledge, before they maneuvered around, moving back into the entrance of the cave. The two first years were grabbed, they were pushed forward and they spotted Savannah bound and gagged, unable to get free. Right next to him, Elizabeth spotted a duffel bag with the initials J.S. etched on the side. It belonged to Savannah and had to have been filled with something that could help them fight off these things, if only she could get break free, but the grip on her shoulders was too strong to even think of breaking.

“Mistress, these two attempted to leave you,” stated one of the vampires, as Eskara walked forward.

“Impressive, Elizabeth, you very nearly got away,” said Eskara calmly, but it was almost like she was proud at the girl’s attempts. “Futile, but the effort was in fact there. I cannot fault you for trying.”

Elizabeth eyed Savannah, who appeared to be trying to get loose himself, but appeared to be getting no close to escaping than they were.

“Okay, just who do you think you are to get away with this?” demanded Draco, as the vampire holding him at tightened his grip on his arms, but Eskara just looked at him, through cold eyes, as if debating whether she should entertaining the Malfoy heir’s demands.

“I am many things, but you can call me Eskara,” responded Eskara finally and Draco’s eyes widened at this bit of news.

“The vampire queen!” yelled Draco, obviously having recognized the story, before attempting to twist out of the vampire’s grip, but the vampire thumped Draco on the shoulder. It bared its fangs and

lowered it towards the neck, but Eskara shook her head. "You can't be real."

"Yet, I am, the Ministry refuses to acknowledge my presence, it would show how inept they are, how little control they truly have if they informed the public of my presence," said Eskara. "The official word is that I am a myth, but soon, all of humanity will learn exactly how real I am."

"So what are you going to do to us?" asked Elizabeth in a fearful voice, it took a lot to terrify her, but being a dark cold cave with vampires did in fact do the trick.

"Do not fear me, Elizabeth, I will not hurt you," replied Eskara in a soothing manner, as opposed to her usual cold tone but this did not do anything to sooth Elizabeth's nerves. The atmosphere was not helping. The only time she had been more scared in her life when she was five and was locked in her cupboard during a thunderstorm.

"You're not going to hurt me, how am I supposed to believe that?" asked Elizabeth in a panicked voice, as she looked around, thinking hard. Nothing could help her escape. "Why would you go to all of this trouble to kidnap me from my own bed, if you aren't planning to hurt me?"

"As much hatred as I hold for humanity for what they've done to me, I would never take it out on my own granddaughter," revealed Eskara.

All will be explained in the next chapter, where Dumbledore, Harry, and Lucius Malfoy all crash the party.

## Chapter Eight: Revelations

“What?” demanded Elizabeth in a state of shock as these words left Eskara’s mouth. Of all the things she could have said, this was the least likely and perhaps most shocking. Elizabeth looked around, eyes widened. Quite frankly, she did not know much about her grandparents, in fact, she was just under the impression that all four of them were dead and thus did not think too much about it further than that. “You...I...how...”

“At one time, I was a mortal,” said Eskara, Elizabeth picking up a bit of disdain in her voice for that past quality. “I was a member of one of the most prominent, pureblood families in Britain. They had views about blood purity that made the views of certain families seem...tolerant towards muggleborns.”

With that, Eskara’s eyes raked over Draco briefly, before she continued her explanation.

“I was expected to go into an arrangement with a wizard of equally pure or greater, blood, but I met a Muggle, I fell in love with him, naturally my parents rejected him, but since I was of age, there was little they could do, except for disown me, which they did, my father cast me out of the family,” replied Eskara, with anger in her eyes as she talked of her parents. “I married this Muggle and we had two daughters. My parents never mentioned me, the rumors were there, but I had paid very little attention, because I was gone. After my marriage, I vowed to never use my wand again. It represented too many bad memories. I hated the Wizarding World and everything it stood for, I never wanted to be drawn into it again. For all intents and purposes, I wished to live the rest of my life as a Muggle. As far as my husband knew, my parents were dead.”

Eskara paused for a moment.

“Petunia’s eleventh birthday came and went, without a Hogwarts letter, but a couple of years later, Lily received hers, and I was conflicted,” admitted Eskara. “I did not want Lily to be dragged into that world, no matter what, but at the same time, I couldn’t let my bad

experiences taint her life. Therefore, I supported her and she went to Hogwarts. Despite the pain of what happened in the past, I was proud of everything your mother did, but it is quite unfortunate that I can't say the same thing about Petunia. She grew jealous, bitter, and resentful, that Lily had the ability to perform magic and she didn't. I was disappointed. I did not raise her to take this attitude. Eventually, she left, marrying a man who was the Muggle counterpart to the family part. Intolerant of anything that was not normal by his world view."

"When did you..." stated Elizabeth who trailed off but Eskara shook her head, knowing what she was going to say.

"I was transformed just before Lily returned from her sixth year at Hogwarts, Death Eaters had found out that I still lived and married a Muggle, so they took it upon themselves to get some revenge on me for polluting the bloodline, but they only got my husband and only severely injured me, leaving me for dead," responded Eskara. "Revenge was the only thing on my mind and I went after them. After searching for several days, I gave it up as a lost cause and prepared to return home, but fate decided to grant me, the gift of immortality, when an extremely powerful vampire attacked me, turning me, intending to use me as a servant. He had underestimated me once I was turned, and I had managed to overcome his attempts to turn me into his slave, before eliminating him. It was a titanic struggle, but had one and began to gain the power that I have on this day."

Elizabeth looked at Eskara but she held up her hand, to prevent the Girl-Who-Lived from speaking.

"I went back and forth, wanting to return to inform Lily that I still existed, but thought against it at the very last minute, when I realized they were too close to a certain individual and once I had heard Voldemort was after Lily and James, I tried to come back to warn them, I sensed they misplaced their trust, but I was too late, all three of them were dead, you were shipped off to them, and I had to return underground, the lingering dark magic had weakened me severely," stated Eskara, and Elizabeth frowned, she could have sworn Eskara said all three of them, but perhaps she had misspoken. "Legally, I

could not have taken custody of you, but there were other ways. However, no matter how hard I tried, every time I got anywhere near your prison I felt weakened.”

“You don’t believe this, do you?” asked Draco, cutting into the silence.

“No one asked you!” snapped Eskara, baring her fangs at Draco, causing Elizabeth to wince slightly.

“Actually, I’m not sure what to believe,” replied Elizabeth, the story seemed a bit odd, but at the same time, in its own strange way, the pieces fit together. “What do you mean there are other ways you could have taken custody?”

“Give you the gift, naturally,” said Eskara with a sigh and sensing the alarmed look on Elizabeth’s face, Eskara tried to elaborate. “I did not want to inflict it onto you, however, in its traditional state, but a modified form, that allowed you to retain your magic and the ability to exist in sunlight, could potentially work. You cannot be happy at the Dursleys, surely?”

“Absolutely not,” said Elizabeth. “That much should be obvious, but still...I don’t know.”

“Your reservations, I can sense them, I can see doubt, and I can understand it, but I have lost all of the people I care about it to the faults of humanity, I will not see you suffer the same fate,” replied Eskara and Elizabeth struggled, as Eskara stepped forward.

“You mean, I don’t have a choice in this, just like when I went with the Dursleys,” remarked Elizabeth in an accusing tone of voice.

“This is much different, that was because you needed to be kept under control, so you did not stray, this is to give you the loving home that you desire,” replied Eskara as she looked forward. “Look into my eyes, grand daughter, yes, peer into them, I know what you wish, your desires, they can all come true, if you accept me. I can help you.”

“Potter, you are a fool if you think she’s not going to end up using...” stated Draco but one of the vampires clapped his hand over Draco’s mouth, to silence him.

“Listen to me, I don’t do this out of any malice, believe me,” said Eskara quietly, as Elizabeth blinked briefly, before her eyes glazed over. “I do not see you as a puppet, a pawn, like others, you are my grand daughter, I will not allow him to make the same mistakes with your life that caused Lily to get killed. Accept me, Elizabeth, this is what you want.”

“I don’t...but...what if...I don’t want...don’t trust,” replied Elizabeth who attempted to fight off the attacks, but found herself being put under. To be honest, she had very little fight to give, her mind was split. On one point, if she was turned into a vampire, Eskara would have the grounds to take custody for her and she would never have to see the Dursleys again. On the other hand, she would remain ageless, watching her friends grow old and die, living many centuries over them. “I sense it, I accept you.”

“That’s good, you know that it is your desire, to have a sense of belong and your family is truly with me, not with those who you had been forced to live with,” said Eskara, preparing to finish the process, to cut her hand, to allow Elizabeth to drink her magically altered blood, to become the first vampire created under the new process, but an anguished shriek from outside the cave had broken her concentration and caused Elizabeth to snap out of the trace she was put in.

“Mistress, he has arrived, Dumbledore, he’s coming,” said one of her followers, forcing Eskara to spin around, as she heard a thump. Quickly, she removed another vial of blood from underneath her robes and drank it quickly, before pulling out the wand. A group of her minions inside the cave had done the same, no doubt Dumbledore was making quick work of the guards on the outside.

“Malfoy was supposed to have the Minister keep him occupied, he failed again. That old fool, he’ll ruin everything like he always does,”



hissed Eskara under her breath, as her followers walked forward, leaving the secured Draco alone with Elizabeth.

“I never thought I’d say this, but I’m glad to see Dumbledore,” replied Draco. “Now, Potter, come on, I need your help, we need to find a way out of here.”

“Don’t want to,” muttered Elizabeth in a dreamy voice and Draco just sighed.

“Look here, do you want to be turned into a blood sucking dark creature for the rest of your life?” demanded Draco.

“Better than the Dursleys,” replied Elizabeth in a stubborn voice.

“Point well taking, but still, I want to get out here!” shouted Draco as he tried to get free, but he remained free. He looked forward, where Savannah was sitting, forgotten, attempting to cut his way free with a jagged piece of rock but it was a futile endeavor.

Quickly, Dumbledore entered, he had received a letter informing him that Elizabeth had been captured. There was a possibility that vampires would try, but he had hoped they would not be successfully. In hindsight, it appeared that Cornelius was manipulated to lure Dumbledore away from the school. Quickly, Dumbledore dodged the attack from the vampire, before knocking it backwards with a light yellow light to the chest. The vampire remained immobile, the diluted sunlight spell having no effect and quickly dove at Dumbledore but Dumbledore put up a shield. The creature bounced off the shield and Dumbledore quickly blasted ropes from his wand. They snapped around the vampire, causing it to be bound.

“That should hold you for the moment,” said Dumbledore, knowing that his securing spells were stronger than most, even able to hold vampires. While he knew more lethal means, he shied away from using them. Quickly, he met two further vampires and they held wands. “It appears Professor Savannah’s reports were true.”

Dumbledore stood, ready to fight, as one of the vampires sent a slicing spell towards his throat. Blocking it, Dumbledore showed great agility for a man of his advanced age, before he used an amount of force to bounce one of the vampires into the rock wall of the cave. A human it would have crushed their skull but with a vampire, it would incapacitate them for several minutes. The other vampire was blasted back into the rocks as well. A slight sticking charm had placed them on the side of the cave, before Dumbledore stepped forward, seeing even more vampires yet.

“Allow me to pass,” said Dumbledore in a pleading voice, even with his great abilities, he could not fight off these many vampires without using lethal means.

“Stand down, my children,” replied Eskara as she stepped forward, before looking at Dumbledore. “I assumed you would be out of the picture for the evening.”

“Yes, but my meeting with Cornelius wrapped up prematurely,” said Dumbledore. “Quite fortunate.”

“For you,” said Eskara, as she fixed a cold stare at Dumbledore, fangs bared, wand in hand. “Just how many of my followers did you slay in an attempt to get your pawn back anyway?”

“None, Eskara, I feel that destruction is never the answer, there is always hope, even in the darkest light,” said Dumbledore swiftly. “I wish you would have come to me right when he had gotten killed. We could have worked together to bring those to justice, instead, you sought vengeance and instead, you were cursed with this unfortunate affliction.”

“Dumbledore, it amuses me greatly that someone of your age could still be so woefully naïve,” said Eskara, as the vampires stood, blank vapid looks in their eyes as they awaited orders from their Mistress. “I have not been cursed, I have been blessed, I have given the gift of immortality, and the fact that sooner or later, hopefully sooner, you will die.”

“Death is just but the next great adventure, nothing to dread, Eskara,” replied Dumbledore.

“Exactly the sort of thing I’ve come to expect from a foolish mortal,” said Eskara. “You know what you’ve done to me, time and time again, the lives you ruined by your inability to see beyond your own crooked nose. I will not allow you to lead Elizabeth down the same path that cost Lily her life. She trusted you, looked up to you, and how do you repay her loyalty? By getting her killed!”

“I am sorry you believe this, but the fact that Lily, James, and Harry died were of unforeseen circumstances, a tragedy, it was a sad day that Voldemort caught up with them, but it was something that I could not prevented,” argued Dumbledore, with a saddened look in his eyes that Eskara was unsympathetic towards. “Surely, you understand.”

“Well, I never expected you to get sympathy from you over the death of a family member, considering what you did in the past,” said Eskara and Dumbledore winced. “Bad memories, Albus, well you should be ashamed at what happened, you killed her, just like you killed Lily, James, and Harry. It might have not been your hand, but if you had not meddled in matters where you were not needed, these tragedies and many others that were similar did not happen.”

Dumbledore just stood, and quickly one of the vampires swooped in, removing Dumbledore’s wand from his possession, for a pair of them grabbed Dumbledore from behind. Dumbledore turned, Eskara had no doubt that he would find a way to escape in a couple of moments.

“I wouldn’t struggle any more, Dumbledore, it would be very bad for the hostages,” stated Eskara, as she moved back, revealing to Dumbledore the secured forms of Draco and Savannah, along with Elizabeth, who was sitting on the floor, a glassy eyed look washing over her face as she sat on the floor of the cave. Dumbledore’s face fell, and he ceased his attempts to free himself, at least for the moment.

“Release them, Eskara, I believe that you have a very obvious quarrel with me and not them,” pleaded Dumbledore but Eskara

laughed madly, as they placed Dumbledore in shackles, that secured him to the wall.

“You I have a grievance with, but Savannah I have some unfinished business with as well, he ruthlessly persecuted my followers for years, despite the fact that his family were killed by a clan of rogue vampires that had no connection to me whatsoever,” replied Eskara.

“All of you blood suckers are the same as far as I’m concerned, all of you should get a stake driven through your heart and your dust thrown down a storm drain!” yelled Savannah, as he gave up a futile attempt to free himself, at least for now. “You’re the most powerful of them all and I’ll kill you for this!”

“You hate vampires and I hold similar hatred for humanity, you know my story there, no need to repeat it” replied Eskara swiftly, staring at Savannah coldly. “You tried to kill me, countless times, unsuccessfully, perhaps you and Dumbledore should trade off. After all, one fails to kill, while the other just leads everyone who trusts them straight to their death.”

“Eskara, listen to me, I know you feel angry at what happened, but it does not have to be this way,” said Dumbledore, as he stared forward towards the vampire queen. “You need to get help, perhaps it is not too late to change...”

“It is too late for you, Dumbledore,” interrupted Eskara. “Where would I find this help? Perhaps in Azkaban but I doubt this very much. The lives you ruined, if your fellow mortals won’t hold you accountable, than I will. And ten years of damage is more than enough, Elizabeth is leaving here with me, just like me.”

“She’s your own grand daughter and you wish to turn her, surely you would not want her to suffer with the curse?” questioned Dumbledore, who now fully understood that Eskara was beyond help. Eskara spun around, glaring at Dumbledore angrily, as if she was offended by him.

“Fool, she suffered at the Dursleys, this offers her a way out, one that you would never give her, because you want to have your little weapon contained,” hissed Eskara, her eyes turning red, fangs bared as she rounded upon Dumbledore.

“Is that all you believe that I think Elizabeth to be?” asked Dumbledore in a disappointed voice.

“The kindly old hurt grandfather act doesn’t work on me, Dumbledore,” replied Eskara roughly, as she advanced on Dumbledore, holding her mouth inches away from his neck, before shaking her head as she drew away from him. “I would drain your blood right now for your insolence, if I did not fear it would give me indigestion.”

Eskara turned to face Elizabeth. She was through playing around, now it was time to save her from being under Dumbledore’s thumb. As it turned out, she was still in a partial trance like state. It would be much easier to turn her, before someone else interrupted them.

“Now, Elizabeth you hear me, you still accept me right,” said Eskara in a calm tone of voice, as she looked down into the girl’s eyes, that had a vapid look in her eyes.

“Yes, I do, I accept you,” said Elizabeth.

“And do you accept this gift, to escape the life that you hated, the relatives that shunned you?” asked Eskara.

“Yes, I want away from them, I want them gone forever,” chanted Elizabeth in a monotone voice.

“Very well, you have agreed to join me, but not as a follower, as an equal, you will be the leader of a brand new race of vampires, that will make humanity pay for all of what they have done to us,” said Eskara. “You will retain all magic and not share our vulnerability to sunlight, but you will gain all of our other qualities. Do you accept this?”

“Yes,” said Elizabeth and Eskara used her wand to slice her forearm, to allow blood to drop into the goblet. Quickly, she healed herself, before walking over, the goblet in her hands.

“All you need to do is drink this, accept what you need to become, it is your escape from your prison,” said Eskara.

“Elizabeth, listen to me!” shouted Dumbledore forcefully over Eskara. “Do not accept this, it will curse you, bind you to life, you will see those who you care about age, wither, and die, but you will remain alive. Reject it.”

“I will not, I accept it, hurt me no longer,” said Elizabeth, as her eyes were still fixed in a trance like state as she accepted the goblet from Eskara and raised it to be drunk, but a loud explosion from the cave entrance had stopped her for a moment and Elizabeth sat in a comatose state, the goblet in her hands, as Eskara turned forward.

“Blast it, now who could it be, surely that cowardly Death Eater would not try something as bold as a straight forward attack,” said Eskara, as she looked forward, before she pointed towards her vampires, who made their way, back backed off at the loud blasts. The heat and the light had backed them off. “Do not stop, the robes will protect you from this...”

Quickly two more vampires fell into the distance, as a blur shot past them, jerking slightly to the side. Eskara stepped forward, to investigate. It appeared her vampires had been wrapped in the Muggle prank item known as silly string. It seemed to be magically reinforced at that, as the vampires took several minutes.

Quickly, Harry dropped down, cursing the school broomsticks. The vampires would be distracted momentarily by his carefully timed explosions with the Filibuster fireworks. Quickly, he saw Elizabeth on her knees a goblet in her hand, with Dumbledore, Savannah, and Draco secured.

“Harry, get me out of here!” snapped Draco looking rather frantic, loosing his mind, but Harry moved over, looking at Elizabeth with

concerned. "Eskara, she's put Elizabeth under some sort of trance, she's babbling some nonsense about...well it's an insane story anyway, it can't be true."

"Kid, there's no time to free us, get in my bag right to the side, there are some grenades, that release high powdered blasts of simulated sunlight, they should be enough to finish off Eskara for good," said Savannah gruffly and Dumbledore looked very disappointed at his Defense Against the Dark Arts teachers extreme means of killing.

"Mr. Black, you should not have taken the risk to come here," said Dumbledore with a sigh but Harry moved over, rifling through Savannah's bag, before he removed the grenades in question. There were only five of them in all, he hoped that would be enough. At that point, Harry crouched down, as he saw Eskara return.

"Whomever was out there, they obviously cowardly fled by now," replied Eskara swiftly, before she turned to Elizabeth. "Now, Elizabeth, do drink up, accept your destiny..."

"LIZZIE SNAP OUT OF IT!" shouted Harry, as he popped out of the shadows, and quickly, Eskara's vampires dove at Harry, fangs bared. Quickly, Harry removed a couple of pieces of garlic. When the vampires attempted to sink their fangs in, they bit into the garlic. Hissing in pain, they staggered back, their lips swelling shot, as more vampires closed in on Harry, grabbing him before he could throw the grenades. "Don't do it, Lizzie!"

"Harry," muttered Elizabeth, as her eyes opened, before she saw the goblet in her hands, full of blood. She set it down, panicking. Surely she was not about to drink a goblet of blood?

"Harry?" whispered Eskara in a low tone of voice, that no one could hear, as she slowly turned her attention right towards Harry, her eyes widening, as something clicked in her mind, as she turned to Dumbledore. "YOU OLD MEDDLING FOOL, I'LL KILL YOU FOR THIS!"

The vampires watched as their Mistress went after Dumbledore, reading to rip his throat out but the shackles broke open and Dumbledore disappeared right before Eskara hit the ground. The vampire bounced back and Dumbledore landed on his feet, jabbing his wand towards Eskara, but the vampire blocking it, before throwing a spell at Dumbledore. Dumbledore winced, as his leg was lacerated, with the vampires in the background looking excited at the sight of blood. He continued to fight back, as Eskara seemed intent to have him ripped to shreds.

“It had to be done,” argued Dumbledore, but Eskara had no desire to hear any explanations, her bloodlust towards Dumbledore turning her features more inhumane. Quickly, Eskara moved forward, but quickly, Harry released one of the grenades. That caused a large blast of light to fill the caves. Instinctively, the vampires shield themselves from the light, as Harry moved over to free Draco from the shackles.

“Alohomora!” shouted Harry, and Draco’s shackles snapped open, as he helped Elizabeth up to her feet “While these two are fighting, let’s get to a safe place, far away from here.”

“Indeed, let them rip each other to shreds,” said Draco, as he watched Dumbledore and Eskara continue their duel.

“Wait, Harry, Draco, listen, we could reason with her,” said Elizabeth, in a pleading voice and Draco and Harry stopped in their tracks, looking at each other. “She is my grandmother, Mum’s mother.”

“She’s your what?” shouted Harry, his legs feeling weak at this sudden new piece of information. He assumed the Dursleys were the only relatives that still existed and despite all of Eskara’s faults, if this was true, Elizabeth would be better off being sent to a blood thirsty vampire queen than those Muggles.

“Never mind Harry, it’s just the insane story I told you about when we got here, now let’s go!” shouted Draco in an alarmed voice, but the vampires had now realized the light had not harmed them. “Lily Evans, Potter, whatever, her parents were Muggles, she obviously



tried to use this story to coerce you into joining her, she wanted to use you, just like You-Know-Who used my father, when he put him under the Imperius Curse.”

Harry stood, remembering something that he read in pass. There was a witch of pureblood with the surname of Eskara that had been disowned for marrying a Muggle and had never been see by the Wizarding World. Surely they could not be one and the same?”

“She’s cursed, if there is someway we can help her, we need to,” said Elizabeth in a pleading voice, but at that time, the vampires had surrounded them. Savannah had managed to free himself at this point, as he made his way towards his bag, before he took out some garlic bombs, taking aim to the group surrounding Draco, Harry, and Elizabeth.

“Away from those children, you foul creatures!” shouted Savannah as he threw the garlic bombs, forcing the vampires to scatter, but he found himself in a struggle with another couple of them, before he turned his attention towards Harry. “Black, throw all of those grenades at Eskara at once, stop her for good!”

“Harry, no!” shouted Elizabeth, as Harry looked at her, the pleading look in her eyes. “We have to help her, I just have a feeling, she never really wanted to be like this, but the curse has warped her slightly.”

“Yes, we have to help her,” agreed Harry, as he came precious inches from throwing the grenades, but stopped at the look in her sister’s eyes.

“Help the vampire that would have killed me or all of us without a second thought?” asked Draco in an incredulously voice. “Both of you are mental. You’d think you two were separated at birth.”

“Draco, quit channeling the spirit of Ron Weasley and shut up,” said Harry firmly, before he saw Eskara and Dumbledore continue their fight. Dumbledore was losing badly. It was obvious that while he was still quicker than most would be at his age, the ravages of time had

not been too kind to Dumbledore. Dumbledore was thrown viciously, landing on the ground. "Eskara, listen!"

Eskara turned, only a half of an eye away from Dumbledore's crumbled, bloodied, but still breathing, body.

"Look, I agree with your hatred with Dumbledore, in fact, I would like to see him thrown into Azkaban right with some of the trash that he helped enable," replied Harry calmly and Dumbledore just gave a sigh, knowing that he was not exactly all that popular with any member of this family at the moment. "Still, killing him would solve nothing, there would be someone else to make the same mistakes, you need to take control of your life, this curse, you need help to lift it."

"A curse, you're mistake, it's a gift," said Eskara as she looked at Harry, conflict on her face. "Isn't it?"

"You could have been there for Lizzie, you could have offered her an alternative instead of the Dursleys, I know you would not have hated her for what she was," said Harry. "Instead, you were forced into the shadows, underground. You could not be there for her, no matter how much you wanted her to be."

"I worked my entire life trying to find a way to be there for her, and I found it, why did you stop me?" demanded Eskara.

"For all the vampires under your power, a part of you resents being turned, so you allow your hatred for humanity to pollute you, no matter what certain people say, truthfully, you only do what you do to survive," replied Harry. "Eskara, let it all go, killing Dumbledore would not bring Lily back. Finding a cure to your disease is important. Maybe you still can be there for Elizabeth."

"It is impossible to cure this," said Eskara, before she backed off. "Elizabeth, you can still join me. The goblet of blood is still there. All you need to do is drink it."

Elizabeth reached over, her hands shaking, as she was about to pick up the goblet, but she withdrew them back, stepping back to face Eskara.

“It was impossible to survive a Killing Curse, but I did that and you can do the impossible too, grandmother,” said Elizabeth quietly and Eskara looked at her, her ice cold blue eyes briefly giving away to an emerald green that were so much like hers.

“GIVE ME THOSE! I’LL END THIS RIGHT NOW!” shouted Savannah as he ripped the grenades from Harry’s hands, before he aimed them at Eskara. Quickly, he attempted to throw them right at Eskara, but Elizabeth grabbed his arm, but Savannah threw her off. The grenades bounced off of the roof of the cave. Harry and Draco both got out of the way of the explosion but Elizabeth did not. Several large rocks fell down, right on top of her, causing Harry to scream in horror. The sunlight spread unevenly throughout the cave and Eskara dove at Savannah, her eyes a blood red, when she realized what he had indirectly done to Elizabeth, as she was facedown in the cave.

“I’LL KILL YOU FOR THIS!” shouted Eskara angrily, as she slashed her wand right at Savannah but Savannah blocked it, before he aimed a garlic block. The vampire queen bounced it back, as Savannah reached for the wooden stake, attempting to drive it through Eskara’s chest.

“Is she alright?” asked Draco, as Harry bent down to check on Elizabeth.

“Yes, she has a pulse, but she’s been knocked unconscious,” said Harry in relief, before he tried to think at their next move.

“Get her out of here, to the hospital wing, I think,” suggested Draco as Harry looked at Eskara. “Oh come on, just let it be, even if she is Elizabeth’s grandmother, she’s not human anymore.”

“People said the same things about your father when he was thought to be a Death Eater,” argued Harry, even though he

suspected that Lucius might have been lying, but he decided to humor Draco's beliefs.

"That's different, he was under the Imperius Curse," argued Draco.

"And Eskara is under a Vampire curse," countered Harry stubbornly as Savannah and Eskara continued their battle.

"I have you now, you foul abomination," grunted Savannah, as he tried to drive the spike right down into Eskara's heart, but the vampire hunter was overpowered.

"No," countered Eskara in a snide tone, as she pulled his right wrist back, snapping it, before she flung Savannah right into the walls, blasting the spike into sawdust. Quickly, she stepped forward, fangs bared, she would finish this one off, but suddenly, her head felt dizzy. The battle with Dumbledore had taken a lot out of her and quickly, Eskara reached into her pocket, before she searching around. "I didn't use them all, I was here later...ah one more."

Eskara raised the vial to her lips but Savannah sprung up, blasting the vial from her hand. The vial shattered in thousands of pieces, as Eskara watched as her precious blood was lost and turned to Savannah. The vampire hunter had just sealed his own fate.

"I might not have my engineered blood but I'll still have yours, to sustain me until I collect more," replied Eskara, hands reached out, charging for Savannah, grabbing him by the throat, before putting her hands over his mouth and noses, beginning to suffocate him. Savannah's wand was lost, but he still had one more garlic bomb left. He tried to fling it but Eskara batted it out of his hand, harmlessly to the side, before she sank her fangs into the neck of Savannah, draining him of precious blood. Savannah slumped down, just barely avoiding certain death, completely drained but he looked up, summoning what little strength he had.

"My simulated sunlight might not have done the trick, but the real one will do you in, Eskara," said Savannah with his last bit of strength and the hole they blasted in the top of the cave had began to allow

sunlight to enter. Savannah shuddered, the blood loss causing him to pass out, but Eskara laughed, along with the other vampires, who had once again surrounded Harry, Draco, and Elizabeth, containing them.

“The sun is kept in check by the ability for these robes to block out any and all sunlight,” said Eskara. “For once, our benefactor came through, most unfortunate that he did not come through in time for this one.”

Eskara turned to Draco, who was kept in a tight grip by the vampires.

“Throw him off the ledge, we’ll see how well he can fly without a broom,” ordered Eskara coldly. “A twenty floor drop straight down onto jagged rocks, not even magic can cushion that fall.”

“We’ll see how well you can cushion your own fall, vampire,” said Lucius Malfoy as he walked into the cave, wand drawn. “Release Draco, your blackmail attempt will not go unpunished. The Ministry of Magic Aurors are on their way”

“Lucius, you should know by now that I am not going to cave in to threats from weakling mortals,” said Eskara. “Dumbledore failed to stop me, the ace vampire hunter on the floor dying from blood loss failed to stop me, you will pay, do not think I failed to learn it was you that orchestrated that attack.”

“What are you blathering about, vampire?” demanded Lucius in confusion, as far as he knew he had never met Eskara until their business dealings.

“I’m sure your son can fill you in when you are both burn in hell together,” said Eskara in a bored voice, but Lucius stood there, with a smug expression on his face, before the vampires began to drop to the ground one by one. Eskara felt a bit weakened and quickly realized what had happened, tossing the robe to the side, but her fellow vampires were not the same as they began to burst into flames from the overexposure to sunlight.

“I believe it is you who will be burning,” responded Lucius smugly, as Eskara stepped forward, her arms and hands blistering, as Lucius stood, before she reached forward, grabbing Lucius and throwing him to the ground with great strength, before she staggered to the cave entrance. She needed to get far away from this place quickly, before she suffered the same fate of many of her followers, but she stopped at Harry for a brief second.

“Look after her,” muttered Eskara in Harry’s ear, catching him off guard, as she gained steam, shifting into the form of a vampire bat, that dove straight towards the ground, flying low and out of sight.

Lucius pulled himself up, seeing his son there and alive, the Malfoy family legacy secured. The slight alternation to the magical properties of the spell, to allow sunlight to be absorbed at an accelerated rate, rather than blocked, had done the trick nicely. It was a shame that Eskara was not destroyed but in her weakened state, she would not be in any position to do anything against him in sometime.

“What happened to Miss Potter?” asked Lucius calmly, as he looked at the unconscious form of Elizabeth.

“She was injured by Savannah, Father,” replied Draco promptly and Lucius nodded.

“She appears to be alright, nothing that a bit of medical attention would not be able to solve,” said Lucius swiftly, before he looked down at Dumbledore, who was struggling to his feet, a sight which filled Lucius’s heart with glee “Headmaster, do you need any help?”

“No Lucius, I am fine, a bit of a lie down and a couple of healing potions and I’ll be back,” said Dumbledore, as he winced taking a step forward.

“Draco, Harry, I trust you boys are both fine,” replied Lucius in a calm even voice.

“Yes, Mr. Malfoy, we are,” said Harry as Draco nodded in confirmation as well.

“Very good then, and Savannah...” said Lucius as he walked over to check on the vampire hunter. “Perished, I’m afraid, lost too much blood, but I think we need to get both the Headmaster and young Miss Potter up to the school, where they can get the treatment they need. I will then send word to the Minister of Magic to meet us there.”

Dumbledore nodded, not exactly in the condition where arguing would be a good idea. He suspected that Lucius played a roll in the events of today, but naturally there was no proof that Dumbledore could use to point to him.

-

A few days had passed. Lucius Malfoy had received an Order of Merlin, First Class for his “heroic actions that saved countless lives”. As far as Harry could tell, it appeared to be a mere wardrobe malfunction and he wondered if Lucius had been behind everything from the beginning, to gain more political capital from the Ministry of Magic. Draco had been taken home after the presentation ceremony, to recover from the traumatic events of the night. No one could be certain what came of Eskara. After the events of that night, she had vanished without a trace. Harry had a feeling that she had went underground to recover from the attack.

As for Elizabeth, she made a full recovery, waking up several hours later, with only a few minor aches and pains. Once she was cleared from the Hospital Wing with a full bill of health, Harry and Elizabeth made their way towards Dumbledore’s office. Harry hoped that Dumbledore would listen to reason and for once in his life, realize that he was not always right. Also, he had remembered that Dumbledore had been withholding something that rightfully belonged to Elizabeth and he would ensure that she would get it.

“Chocolate Frog,” said Harry, causing the gargoyle outside of Dumbledore’s office to spring open and allowing them both inside, where Dumbledore was sitting at his desk. It appeared that he had recovered mostly from his fight with Eskara.

“Ah, Elizabeth, Harry, do have a seat,” replied Dumbledore as Elizabeth and Harry sat down right across from Dumbledore.

“Dumbledore, I understand you have something that belongs to Elizabeth. A family heirloom, something that should have been passed to her once she got her Hogwarts letter,” replied Harry, looking at Dumbledore.

“I’m afraid I don’t know what you are talking about,” said Dumbledore, who obviously knew what Harry was talking about, but he did not want to give up the Invisibility Cloak to Elizabeth, for fear that she might use it as a tool to run from the Dursleys.

“Then maybe we should get the goblins involved,” countered Harry. “At the very least it should have been returned to the vault once James Potter died and I daresay they might not be as kind as I am right now.”

“Oh, yes the Invisibility Cloak, I had nearly forgotten in all the excitement of this year,” replied Dumbledore suddenly, which prompted Harry to roll his eyes, as he moved over towards the back of the office, before he removed a silvery cloak, before he walked over towards Elizabeth. “I trust this will be used responsibly Miss Potter.”

“Yes, I will be more responsible with this, than you were when you decided to send me to relatives that obviously would hate me for being a witch,” replied Elizabeth and Dumbledore did a double take, at the accusing look in the girl’s eyes. “Why do I have to go back? All four of us would be a lot happier if I never saw the Dursleys again.”

“Now, Miss Potter, I am sure that your family does care about you, deep down,” replied Dumbledore and Elizabeth just snorted.

“Yeah, right, I don’t care how big of a shovel you have, you’ll never be able to find anything resembling love,” said Elizabeth. “Give me a good reason why I can’t go to straight to Harry’s for the summer.”



“It is for your own safety that you return to the Dursleys, at least for a month,” said Dumbledore, with a twinkle in his eye. “Now, there is no way that I can technically force you, but the Ministry of Magic might interpret you not returning to your relatives as a kidnapping on the part of Andromeda Black, no matter if you go home with her willingly or not.”

Harry was angered and Elizabeth appeared to be equally so.

“Right, and I’m certain you would have no influence on anyone with the Ministry for that matter,” retorted Elizabeth in a sarcastic matter. “You say I’m safe at the Dursleys, that’s a laugh. Even if they are magic-hating xenophobes, what am I supposed to be safe from? I mean, Voldemort’s supposed to be dead. Otherwise, this world would not be worshipping me like I’m a goddess, for something I can’t even remember.”

“I fear that Voldemort may be still out there in some form,” said Dumbledore after a moment’s pause. “Weakened yes, but still have the potential to have his former power. We cannot take any chances that he may return and finish the job that you started. Circumstances indicate that the Dursleys are the safest place for you.”

“Why can’t I be protected somewhere else, in fact, why did Voldemort want to kill me in the first place, what was so special about me?” asked Elizabeth. “Or is this just a case of just him being a psychopath, killing anyone without reason.”

“Now, the sanity of Voldemort could be debated for years, but I assure you that all of his actions did have a motive, no matter how twisted, including the murder of your parents and your attempted murder, but the reason that he did along with the reason why the Dursleys would be the safest place for you, are stories for another day,” said Dumbledore calmly. “That day is not today however, perhaps in a few years, when you’re older.”

“Yes, and what if you die before I become older, before you tell me?” demanded Elizabeth.

“ I can assure you I have contingencies in place,” replied Dumbledore calmly. “If you were truly in danger at your relatives, you would be pulled out of their in a second, surely you could believe that. Right now, it is a necessary precaution to take.”

“If you say so, Headmaster,” replied Harry, who turned to Elizabeth and muttered in her ear. “For now, until we have solid proof that the Dursleys are unfit to take care of even a goldfish.”

“One more thing I want to ask about you, Professor Dumbledore,” said Elizabeth and Dumbledore looked on. “The matter of my grandmother.”

“Elizabeth, there is something that you must understand, your grandmother died all those years ago, the moment she was inflicted with the curse of immortality,” said Dumbledore kindly. “It is unfortunate, tragic, that she was lead down the path she was, but there is no turning back. The fact remains she was willing to use you proves that she was truthfully dead.”

“Or maybe she was trying to get me away from my unfit guardians, something that you seem to be incapable of doing, Professor,” said Elizabeth.

“I have made my position on this matter clear, Miss Potter,” said Dumbledore. “For all we know, she has perished completely and relieved of the curse. She did seem weak when she fled.”

“She’s still out there, I know it, we have to help her,” argued Elizabeth. “Find a way to bring her to what she once was, to be a human once more.”

“It cannot be done, Miss Potter,” said Dumbledore in a calm voice. “I’m truthfully sorry you had to learn about what became of her, but it is best to know that your grandmother died before you were even born. The only relatives you have left are the Dursleys and that is where your place is.”

“I get it, you don’t want to help her, because she can see through what you truthfully are!” shouted Elizabeth, losing her temper, as she stood up to her full height. “Something about you, what you’ve done, I can’t put my finger on it, but you want me to be your little weapon against Voldemort, if he ever comes back. If you think I’m fighting the Wizarding World’s battles, you better rethink your strategy!”

“I would not expect you to fight Voldemort at this time as it stands at this point,” countered Dumbledore, but he had hoped that Elizabeth would change her mind, because the prophecy indicated that she would be the only one to match Voldemort should return. It seemed that she had a lot of resentment towards the Wizarding World as a whole, based on being sent to the Dursleys. “In time, you may find yourself having to dealing with this sooner or later.”

“Why?” demanded Elizabeth. “Why should I stick my neck out for a world that mostly uses my name as a hero that I could never live up to and would turn on me once the next fad comes along?”

“Once again, when you are older, all will be explained,” said Dumbledore mysteriously and Harry knew that was the wrong thing for Dumbledore to say.

“Yes, that’s right, you don’t owe me any explanations, Dumbledore,” said Elizabeth, glaring at him. “I guess I’ll get ready to return to my prison for the summer, where I slave away doing chores while their precious ickle Diddydums gets everything he wants because he just pouts a little bit and I get the blame for everything that goes wrong in their lives. Yes, that’s really fair, how dare I question the wisdom of the great and powerful Albus Dumbledore?”

“Miss Potter, calm down...” stated Dumbledore but Elizabeth just angrily turned her back, storming from Dumbledore’s office. Slowly, Dumbledore turned to Harry, who sat across from him, arms folded, with narrowed eyes. “Harry, I would appreciate it if you talked some sense into her, she was overreacting with the situation with her relatives.”

“No, Professor, I’m pretty sure she wasn’t, if you take a close look at Dudley, you may get a pretty good idea what Vernon and Petunia is like,” said Harry. “As for the Eskara matter, I think if you really put your mind to it, you could at least find a temporary cure, that could allow her to gain custody of Elizabeth, if she constantly reapplies it. Of course, Headmaster, I don’t think you want to, you seem to be doing everything in your power to keep Elizabeth at the Dursleys. Why you think that’s a good idea, I couldn’t even begin to guess.”

“I have my reasons, Harry,” said Dumbledore swiftly as if that solved everything.

“I’m sure you do, Headmaster,” responded Harry. “Just like I have my reasons for wanting her out of there.”

“Indeed,” said Dumbledore. “I believe this meeting is over.”

“For now, Headmaster,” replied Harry as he walked out, intending to give Elizabeth time to cool off before he found her. “For now.”

Coming Up: Another transition chapter, followed by a summer chapter, and then we dive into the second year.

## Chapter Nine: Best Laid Schemes

It was the day before they were to return home from another year at Hogwarts. Something that Elizabeth was not quite looking forward to, after all, she would have to return home to the Dursleys. She wanted to just run, but she was worried that Dumbledore would suspect that Andromeda had something to do with this and thus she would get into trouble. Elizabeth looked longingly, at all of the students at Hogwarts chatting in an excited matter, bursting with anticipating of going home with their families. She wondered what that might be like to go home to a family that cared about her. The thing with her grandmother was weighing heavy on her mind, if she could have found a way to cure her, than Elizabeth would never have to return to the Dursleys. The fact was, Elizabeth had no idea where she would have went, as she sat down at the Ravenclaw table between Lisa and Padma. Despite the fact they were friends, Elizabeth decided not to mention about Eskara being her grandmother. All Elizabeth told them was that her and Draco just barely managed to escape and the rest was a blur.

“You look depressed,” said Padma with a concerned look, but it was plainly obvious the reason why.

“The year’s over,” answered Elizabeth with a wistful sigh, as she looked at them, they had families to go home to. She considered the Dursleys to be related to her unfortunately, but not her families.

“And you have to return to them,” said Lisa with a frown as Elizabeth nodded, frustration mounting on her face.

“Only for a month, I’m going to Harry’s on my birthday,” said Elizabeth. “I spent ten years there, ten long years, I’m sure I can sustain a month.”

“If you say so, Liz,” said Lisa. “Don’t give up hope that you’ll find a way out of there, maybe you should contact the Wizengamot. Surely they could get your custody with the Dursleys overturned. It’s got to be worth a shot.”

“Dumbledore’s the Chief Warlock, remember?” said Elizabeth. “Harry’s mother tried to get the Ministry to look closer, but they shot her down any time. They’re going to do everything Dumbledore says. I don’t know why Dumbledore insists on keeping me there, he says he’s keeping there for my own safety or something like that.”

Elizabeth sat, seeing Dudley glare at her from the Slytherin table. The results from the exams had come in just recently and Dudley had failed everything. It was a small consolation that Dudley would not be attending Hogwarts any longer. Despite that Vernon and Petunia did not want her precious little son to be contaminated by magic, Elizabeth had the strangest feeling that she was going to get blamed for Dudley failing. The fact that she was second in her year, just slightly ahead of Hermione Granger but a bit behind Harry in the class standings was not going to help her cause when she got home at all.

“Well, one good thing, at least he won’t be coming here next year,” said Lisa in an attempt to cheer Elizabeth up, and this earned a slight, if strained, smile from her face.

“Yeah that’s a good thing, I guess,” answered Elizabeth as she looked at Dudley. That was the kind of look that he gave her right before Dudley had his gang hold Elizabeth’s arms behind her back so he could pummel her, as she took a few more bites of breakfast, trying to eat up as much as she could before she returned home. “How much time do we have before the train is going to leave anyway?”

“Three and a half hours,” replied Padma promptly. “That should give us enough time to make sure everything is packed and make sure all of our library books are not late at being returned.”

“Yes. I don’t want to go through that again,” shuddered Lisa, remembering when she had neglected to do so and the book had began beating her on the head. Needless to say she vowed to never make that fatal error. The three girls got to their feet, before they made their way to their dormitory to do one last check through of items that they might have missed packing the first time through.

-

The Hogwarts Express was a long ride back to the school. Harry, Elizabeth, Lisa, and Padma all found a compartment to sit in together. After a few minutes, with Elizabeth sitting in an uncomfortable silence, a bit of a sorrowful look in her emerald green eyes, Harry looked over, leaning forward, before speaking to her.

“Lizzie, I know, you have to return, it’s not what you want, but we’ll get you out of there somewhere, even if I have to flood Dumbledore’s office with owls every single day of the summer,” said Harry, and Elizabeth gave a strained smile in spite of the situation. “He needs to see the truth, that it’s not good for your health if you are staying there, but don’t try and run away, it will just make everything worse.”

“I understand Harry, believe me, I do,” stated Elizabeth quietly, as she looked at the window, it was getting closer to Kings Cross in London, as she felt great anger towards Dumbledore. She envisioned him getting blasted through the wall, laying in a puddle of his own blood, for what he did to her. “It’s just, it will be a bit boring this summer...”

“It doesn’t have to be though, I’ll write to you every single day, we all will,” stated Harry in a firm force and Padma and Lisa both nodded in agreement, they were planning to anyway.

“Yes, don’t worry, Liz, every single day, like clockwork, you’re get something from us,” added Lisa, as the train came to a slow stop, as the four first years, soon to be second years moved forward, lifting up their trunks, lightening charms placed on them, as they moved towards the exit of the train. Dudley brushed towards Elizabeth, anger in his eyes, as he passed her.

“You all have a nice summer,” said Elizabeth and the others nodded, about ready to wish her the same thing, but catching a glimpse of her relatives at the edge of the train station had made them realize it will be a bit of wishful thinking. “Harry, maybe you should go and find...”

“No, I’d like to meet your relatives,” said Harry, as he stared at Vernon and Petunia, who were glaring impatiently towards the edge of the platform where Dudley had just exited. Dudley was telling them something, that obviously was not to their pleasure. As they edged closer they heard a bit of the conversation.

“Absolutely not, Dudley, you took your first year, we did what that woman told us, we won’t write to that freak place and let you stand in there another moment!” boomed Vernon in a loud voice, as he watched Dudley, who held the wand in his hand, along with a note that said that the Ministry of Magic representatives would be here to snap it the next day. “No son of my would be a freak, its bad enough we had your freakish cousin had to be forced onto us.”

“But Dad...” whined Dudley, he was confident if he spent just a little bit more time, he could put his cousin in her place and expose her as the fraud she was but Vernon’s purple face turned towards his son, obviously angry at him for daring to question him, wanting to be a freak of all things.

“Enough, not another word, you were supposed to go to Smeltings, a respectable institution and it’s lucky I managed to call someone to get you admitted a year late, a year that you wasted at that school,” replied Vernon as Dudley entered the car, with Petunia just standing there, not saying anything as Vernon slowly turned to Elizabeth. “And it’s about time you showed up, you...”

“Hello, Mr. Dursley,” said Harry, using Vernon’s formal title with a bit of sarcasm. “I’m Elizabeth’s friend Harry, from Hogwarts.”

Petunia’s eyes perked up at the word “Harry”, giving a frown that was oblivious by both Vernon and Elizabeth, as Vernon stared at Harry, absolutely enraged that this boy had the gall to interrupt him when he was putting the little freak in her place.

“What should I care if you’re her friend?” demanded Vernon, his face growing purple. “I don’t care, you’re not coming around my house, the neighbors could say something, so don’t be thinking I’ll have another one near my family. Dudley’s already corrupted...”



Vernon went off on a rant, Harry would be astonished if he did not drop dead of a heart attack right before their very eyes, given how angry he seemed to be.

“Well, I can see where Lizzie doesn’t get her charming personality,” replied Harry and Vernon raised his fist, but withdrew it, due to the fact that there were too many witnesses. Harry wished Vernon would have hit him. Vernon striking an underage wizard would have given him perfect cannon fodder for an unfit guardian case that would be that would get Elizabeth out of there. “Just be sure, that if you do anything to make her summer miserable, you’ll be sorry.”

“What could you do to me?” demanded Vernon.

“Nothing but I can do plenty,” said a voice and Harry looked over, to see Nymphadora standing there. Vernon seemed to be absolutely mortified at Nymphadora’s shocking pink spike hair, but Petunia still appeared to be spooked by Harry’s presence. Dudley looked like his usual dumbstruck self, Harry suspected that was the way he looked when he was born. “I work for the Ministry of Magic and while technically by law, we can’t use magic on Muggles, they look the other way on certain circumstances. Especially when a Muggle is doing something that endangers a magical child.”

“Endangers? Listen here you pink haired weirdo, we gave her food, board, and clothing, when we could have left her on the street, where she would have had to be a w...” said Vernon but his throat appeared to not working, as Nymphadora pointed her wand towards it, standing there, with a frown. Harry had a feeling that he would have been the youngest person ever sent to Azkaban if Vernon was allowed to finish his sentence.

“Listen up, we’d like nothing better than for Elizabeth to never enter your house again, but Dumbledore is tying of everyone’s hands hands,” said Nymphadora in an irritated voice, as she held her wand. Vernon’s face purpled and he opened his mouth wide, with no sound coming out. “You can make this easy on yourself or you can make

this hard on your self. Treat her with respect or we will be having this conversation again, but next time it will be more painful.”

“And Lizzie, if they give you any trouble, don’t hesitate to write straight away,” said Harry and Elizabeth nodded, as Vernon looked enraged.

‘I don’t think there will be much of a problem,” said Petunia finding her voice, fearful of what the neighbors would think more of anything, but still the matter of Harry was still bothering her. Perhaps she was being paranoid, after all, Harry was a rather common name, but still Dumbledore had basically forced the girl on her, saying that her twin was dead. Could she put it past him to fake a death. “We’ll just interact with each other as less as humanly possible and we’ll get through the summer, won’t we Vernon?”

Vernon just shot his wife a disgusted look but nodded fearfully, when he saw the narrowed eyes to Petunia gave him. It was obvious who wore the pants in that household from that exchange. Nymphadora cancelled to spell, before turning to Elizabeth.

“Good bye, Elizabeth, we’ll come and get you as soon as the month is up,” replied Nymphadora and Elizabeth nodded.

“Okay, thanks Dora, bye Harry, have a nice summer!” called Elizabeth, as she looked forward, as Vernon just grumbled as he walked around, looking over his shoulder.

“See you soon enough, I’ll write even sooner,” said Harry, as Vernon entered the car and hit the gas pedal, barreling out of there. He did not want to be in the presence of freaks any longer than he had to. Nymphadora and Harry had both watch him go, driving out of sight.

“Think he got our message?” asked Nymphadora as she watched Vernon drive recklessly off and out of sight.

“Hope so, Elizabeth doesn’t deserve anymore, but the minute we can get her out, we will,” said Harry, once again, a hatred of Dumbledore in his mind.

“Mum wrote again to the Wizengamot, to try and get the issue of her custody open, we’ll see if it works for the hundredth time,” said Nymphadora, as she looked over, where they saw Andromeda looking at them with a sigh. “There she is, we better go and meet her.

Harry nodded, he had apparently missed Ginny, but since she visited his house along with Luna almost every day during the summer, they would be seeing each other soon enough. They walked over to Andromeda.

“What were you two up to anyway?” asked Andromeda calmly.

“Oh you know, just making sure that Elizabeth’s relatives treated her with the proper respect when she went there for her month there,” said Nymphadora casually, as her mother just placed her hands on her hips.

“Yes, I can see that, but please tell me you didn’t threaten them too badly,” said Andromeda.

“Us never,” stated Harry as Nymphadora laughed at the innocent look on Harry’s face. It was so over the top and fake that it caused her to laugh so loudly, that several people were looking at them like they were strange. It took Nymphadora about a minute to regain her composure, before she could look at her mother with a mostly straight face.

“Yeah we’d never do that,” replied Nymphadora with a grin as Andromeda sighed, wondering what she was going to do with those two.

“Well, not that I’m saying that I don’t agree with what you’re doing, but still...” said Andromeda before she trailed off. As their mother, she felt she kind of had to reprimand them, even if Nymphadora was not underage anymore, but when considering the situation with

Elizabeth being placed at the Dursleys, her heart truthfully was not in it. Standing for a few seconds, she turned to both of them, before they made sure no one was coming and walked forward to take the Floo and head on home.

-

Lucius Malfoy sat in his manor house at the end of the table. His wife was out, purchasing a new set of dress robes for the Ministry ball that they were to be attending within the next week. His son was upstairs, supposed to be completely his school work. After his dismal fourth place finish in the Hogwarts class standing, Lucius expected better from his heir. This gave Lucius some time alone to sit back and reflect of what happened. The last year had not gone precisely as Lucius had planned but overall it did turn out nicely.

The vampire fiasco, Eskara had led Lucius to believe that she was going to eliminate the Girl-Who-Lived. As it turned out, what Lucius managed to get out of Draco, she had claimed to be the girl's grandmother. It took Lucius a moment to realize that Eskara was a very familiar name to him. The surname of a pureblood who had polluted her family line by marrying a Muggle. Lucius had long since forgotten the Muggle's name, it did not matter, but the fact was that Rosaline Eskara was a blood traitor. One day, Lucius, MacNair, Rosier, and another couple of Death Eaters who were unimportant to Lucius's recollection ability had a few drinks and decided to take it upon themselves to cleanse some blood traitors on behalf of the Dark Lord. Eskara and her family was one of their targets on that night. As far as Lucius remembered, the Muggle was killed and he had thought the blood traitor was killed as well. Briefly, he wondered how she could have survived and more importantly, risen to be considered a vampire queen, with so many devoted followers. Further questions for another day, but Lucius had a small amount of satisfaction knowing she was weakened or perhaps destroyed, unable to pose a threat to him any longer.

Despite Elizabeth Potter not dying, Lucius did feel that the events of that day benefitted him greatly. For one, he had been painted as a hero for saving the Girl-Who-Lived from a horrible fate, getting an Order of Merlin first class. He gained even more trust and perhaps a

bit more leeway for his activities from Minister Fudge. Most importantly, Dumbledore's reputation took a bit of a hit for the incident. Many were questioning his ability to run a school, when he could not keep vampires out. While he was at a meeting with the Minister, many were not in the mood to hear excuses, but rather to hear action. The more Dumbledore's reputation fell, the more Lucius's could rise beyond what it was at this point. The Malfoy name commanded a lot of respect but Lucius wanted to make it one that was untouchable.

Still there was his responsibility regarding the Girl-Who-Lived. It was a hope that her magic hating relatives would have did his job for him, but no such luck. The fact remained that Andromeda Black continued to remain persistent in trying to remove the girl from that home but so far thanks to a combination of Lucius's influence, along with Dumbledore's standard meddling, she remained at the Dursleys. It was for the best, as she would not be able to practice magic due to being in a Muggle home for two months. If she was in a magical home, then she would be able to practice magic without warning, as the Ministry could not strictly monitor the person who did the magic, just the magic itself.

Lucius found the irony that both him and Dumbledore had the same goal to keep Potter at her Muggle relatives in mind rather amusing. Sure, it was for entirely different reasons, but still that one bit of interesting information gave Lucius a bit of amusement.

Lucius stepped back as his fireplace came to life. This particular fireplace was not connected to the Ministry Floo Network, but rather a separate Floo Network that the Dark Lord set up to ensure secure communication between his followers. Looking up, he saw a folded up piece of parchment shoot from the green flames. Walking over, Lucius bent at the knees, unfolding the parchment, looking at it carefully. In truth, he should have expected this to come sooner.

Lucius:

Meeting is being held at the usual place in an hour's time about your lack of progress on a certain matter.

Us.

Lucius folded up the piece of parchment, tapping his wand with it, causing it to burst into flames. Stepping forward, Lucius walked over, retrieving his walking stick from right beside the fire place, before he turned slightly to the side.

“Dobby!” shouted Lucius in a rough voice and at the little crazed house elf appeared, bowing before his master.

“Master Lucius wanted to see Dobby?” asked the house elf, as it rocked back and forth on the heels of its feet, staring at Lucius with widened eyes.

“Indeed, now if Narcissa returns before I do, tell her that I am at a meeting with the Minister of Magic,” said Lucius and Dobby bowed before looking at Lucius. “Very well, leave me, before I decide to punish you.”

Dobby quickly departed with a second pop, as Lucius turned on his feet, as he prepared to leave, quickly coming up with an explanation that pacify those people. If anything else, Lucius was good at spinning a story so it could benefit him.

With his facts straight in his head, Lucius disappeared quickly, ready to face to whatever they had to throw at him. He was better connected than any of them, but together, they might pose a problem and Lucius did not want his well placed plans thrown off balance.

-

Stepping down a long dark winding corridor, with mold growing to the walls and the floors dusty, it was easy to see that this was not a place that had been cleaned in many years. It was the last place that anyone would expect a group of pureblood nobles to meet, so it was perfect for a meeting. Lucius walked forward, wearing robes that while not his best, were better than what must could afford, as he held his walking stick in his hand. He stepped forward, the door knob was rusty and could barely turned to open the door. That’s what

magic was for as Lucius raised his wand, pointing it towards the keyhole.

“Alohomora,” whispered Lucius as it clicked open, causing the door to swing open, creaking on the hinges. Quickly he moved forward, where there were several moth worn chairs. Conjuring a cloth, Lucius placed it over the chair, before he sat down, as many more wizards filed in. At that point, Yaxley stepped up to the podium and cleared his throat.

“This emergency meeting of the Council of Blood Purity has come to order,” stated Yaxley as they all muttered. “I am pleased to see you could make it here in short notice, as this meeting is grave, of an issue that threatens to stabilize the structure of the magical social status.”

The members nodded dully, before Lucius stood to his feet, clearing his throat, as all of their eyes were on him.

“My friends, the issue of our resident hero, Elizabeth Potter is one that had plagued us for some time, she is a status symbol for Mudbloods, half bloods, and blood traitors a like,” narrated Lucius. “She is a symbol of hope that they can be something beyond what they should be in our society but I do not feel that she poses as much of a threat as you think. She is just a mere child and a sheltered one of that, we made sure that she remained at her Muggle relations, with the inadvertent help of Dumbledore I might add, despite many attempts for others to gain custody of her.”

“Lucius, it’s not as cut and dry as you make it out to be,” said Avery smoothly, as he stared at Lucius. “We had assumed the girl would be sorted into Gryffindor, but much alarm was raised when she was sorted into Ravenclaw as well. She could forge some connections in that house, considering it is a neutral ground. Some of our most prominent pureblood minds could be led astray by her radical views.”

“What radical views might those be?” asked Lucius even though he knew thanks to the information he managed to get from his son. Still,

it was best to not let on that he knew as much as he did around this crowd.

“Lucius, do not plead ignorance, it might work with most of the politicians at the Ministry, but with us we are wise to your games,” said Nott with a slight glare through narrowed eyes. “We are of course referring to the fact that the girl has a tendency to question the way magic is supposed to work, making changes, improvements, if others follow her work, they could make changes and then it could lead to a dangerous precedent. If they question the way magic works, perhaps then other things about our society will be questioned.”

“Yes, something that can’t be done,” said a man with dark hair that had the slightest hints of grey along with a scowl on his face.

“And what would you suggest that would be done, Montague?” asked Lucius smoothly, throwing the ball back into the court of someone else.

“It is your responsibility to deal with her Lucius, this deal that you made with vampires was a foolish error on your part, vampires could care less about humanity as a whole, it was obvious that you were being used for a pawn,” said Montague swiftly. “You best think of a way to eliminate the girl quickly or the Malfoy name will be worth even less than having the last name Weasley.”

“Need you forget that I am the Minister of Magic’s personal advisor,” said Lucius in a bored drawl, not rattled by the comments of his fellow council members.

“Ah yes, Lucius about that, Ministers come and Ministers go, so all we have to do is pull a few strings and Fudge might find himself on the wrong end of a scandal,” remarked another member of the council in a bored voice, and Lucius knew that his back was against the wall. While he had more resources and contacts within the Ministry than any member of the Council, if they had all joined to ruin him, there was little he could do.



“The point is seen to and conceded, Goldstein,” said Lucius who had known exactly when to fight his battles, but vowed to get together his supporters on the Council, knowing that if he could divide and conquer, he would regain control. “Disposing of the girl might be a problem, I fear that Dumbledore is keeping a close watch on me after the incidents of the previous year.”

“That is your problem Lucius,” said Montague as he put his hands together and looked forward. “Time and time again, this Council has been very patient with you. Fail us further, and we will vote to expel you from our meetings. You will be forever branded a blood traitor. Do not take this matter lightly, Lucius.”

“Don’t worry, I won’t,” said Lucius, carefully making the Council believe that he conceded his point of contention. He never expected Elizabeth Potter to be the magnitude of the problem she was becoming in her first year. The Dursleys should have mentally beaten her down, to the point where she would just go to school with an underachieving ambition, getting her sorted into Gryffindor. Instead, her trials at the Dursleys had made her want to rebel against all authority and that was the last thing Lucius needed right now. “Now, any further matters that we need to discuss.”

“No, Lucius,” said Yaxley in a bored tone of voice. “Just remember what we said, we wish to see something more thoroughly and remember, eliminate her in a way that can no way tie her death back to us.”

Lucius nodded, while envisioning several of the council members, bloodied and battered, begging for his mercy, as he stood over them triumphant, a mad glint in his eyes. In his mind’s eye, they looked at him, he was more feared than the Dark Lord at the height of his powers. Lucius gave a small shadow of a smirk that he hid. They might have had the upper hand in this matter, for the moment, but that would change. Lucius made his way to a standing position.

“Believe me, I sympathize with everything, we can ill afford to allow those of less pure blood think they can get away with changing our world,” said Lucius as he leaned on his walking stick, careful not to

turn his back on the members of the council. They were devious as he was, he would not put it best them to attack him while his back was turned, if they could make it fatal. He was of course an obstacle to many of them and with him out of the picture, their status could rise. "I may be seeing all of you soon, at the upcoming funeral with the Girl-Who-Lived."

"For your sake, Lucius, let us hope that your prediction of our next encounter is an accurate one," said Yaxley as the other members got to their feet, all looking around, none trusting to their backs. They all nodded, in farewell, before departing the musty, filthy building.

-

Lucius returned home, making his way straight to the Drawing Room. Stepping forward, Lucius grabbed a hold of the handsomely crafted bust of himself on the mantle, before pulling it open, revealing a switch of sorts. Raising his wand, Lucius placed it inside the switch, while pushing back a rug with his foot, causing it light up and a trap door to reveal itself before it cracked open. Quickly, Lucius closed his bust, before he descended down into the trapdoor, walking down a winding staircase until he entered his secret chamber.

Inside the chamber, laid many artifacts that Lucius had collected over the years, questionable to be certain. He had many more in his private vault at Gringotts, but these were among those that he did not trust to be left in the hands of those money grubbing goblins. Stepping forward, Lucius open a small chest right on the edge of a table.

"Ah, here it is," muttered Lucius to himself, as he removed a small black book from inside the box, examining it closely. It was the only item that did not appear to be dusty or dirty in any way. Lucius could feel the power cycling onto his finger tips as he held the book. He had intended to use this artifact to discredit Arthur Weasley, but it would do fine enough considering his problem regarding the Girl-Who-Lived. Looking around, Lucius tucked the item into his pocket, before he made his way up the stairs. Lucius exited the trapdoor, before opening the bust once again, cancelling the charm. The trap door

disappeared, leaving nothing but the floor below it. Lucius walked off, a calculating expression on his eyes.

From the darkness, a pair of little eyes stared forward, sensing both the power of the dangerous item in his master's pocket and sensing his master's intentions.

## Chapter Ten: House Elves and Pretentious Prats.

To say that Elizabeth hated her summer vacation so far would be an understatement. She was having one of the most miserable times of her entire life and that was saying something. The fact that she was isolated from the rest of the magical world for the most part really got on her and despite their promises, Elizabeth had not gotten one single letter from any of her friends. Something in her mind told her that Dumbledore might have had something to do for this, to keep her at the Dursleys and think that everyone had forsaken her, so she would be more dependent on Dumbledore. She was not going to fall for it and knew her friends would not either.

The Dursleys had been mostly tolerable. Sure they had locked away all of her books, to isolate her from the magical world, but Elizabeth swiped her wand before they could lock it away as well. It would do her no good because to the fact that they were not allow her to do magic on summer breaks outside of Hogwarts. Still, it was a comfort to just have her wand on her, it added a bit of familiarity to a place where she belonged, as opposed to somewhere that was her prison.

“YOU!” shouted Vernon Dursley in an angry tone of voice, breaking Elizabeth out of her thoughts, as she was completing dinner, the one chore she did not actually mind doing considering the alternative was eating Petunia’s cooking. Vernon had been jumpy all week and it was obvious why, as he was having a very important client and his wife for dinner to discuss a deal with drills. He wanted to make the deal go through, he was fixing to gain a huge commission from the deal.

“Yes,” replied Elizabeth blandly, not wanting to raise her uncle’s ire anymore than she had to. Harry and Dora had warned Vernon about his behavior, but still, her uncle had been known to have his moments where his temper got the best of him.

“All of the food had better be fixed properly,” said Vernon, as his face began to turn purple. “The Masons will be over in an hour and I want everything ready. The money I’m getting from this deal will allow me, your aunt, and your cousin finally go on that vacation that we have been planning for a while, so don’t you dare screw it up.”

“Right, I won’t screw it up, but perhaps you should have gotten a personality transplant, because I can’t see anyone in your right mind thinking you’re fit to do business with,” muttered Elizabeth under her breath, as she began to carry the completed meals through the table, the fact that this would be so much better with a levitation spell all too evident throughout her mind. “That will be all, I take it.”

“Yes, it would,” answered Petunia before Vernon could say anything. Elizabeth noticed that her Aunt had been acting rather strange all summer “You may take a plate and go upstairs to your room, where you will remain until we say differently.”

Elizabeth nodded, as she took a plate and piled some food on it, before she made her way up the stairs, as she thought about the fact that Harry said she was going to get to leave for her birthday. She hoped that was still on, she wanted to get out of his house. All of her mail had been blocked, she had been doing chores all day to prepare for a stupid dinner party that she was never going to attend, and earlier today, she could have sworn she saw eyes watching her from the bushes. That sight alone caused her a bit of trauma.

Moving forward, Elizabeth twisted the knob to open the door and when she opened it, she saw a little creature with large ears and tennis ball like eyes sitting on her bed. The creature looked up right at Elizabeth, before springing up with an astonished and awed look on its face.

“Elizabeth Potter, it is such an honor to meet you!” cried the creature in a voice that Elizabeth was almost certain could be heard for miles to come, much less downstairs for the Dursleys.

“What in the bloody hell are you?” asked Elizabeth in an agitated voice, not pleased that a creature wearing a filthy pillowcase was sitting on her bed. She had no idea where it was or where it had been.

“Miss, I is just Dobby, Dobby the house elf,” answered Dobby as the creature was bouncing up and down in an excited manner on the balls of its feet. “Dobby has wanted to meet you for sometime, he isn’t

quite sure hows he be telling you this, but he has urgent news that Elizabeth Potter must hear.”

“Calm down, take a deep breath, and quit bouncing up and down,” suggested Elizabeth in a tired voice, as she heard the arrival of Vernon’s business clients downstairs and knew that having a house elf up in her room would raise all sorts of question that she did not want to answer. “And keep your voice down, I don’t want them to hear us.”

“Right, Miss, Dobby is sorry, Dobby is not worthy of being in the presence of a powerful witch like Elizabeth Potter,” replied Dobby in a sad voice and before Elizabeth could say anything, Dobby launched himself forward, before he began to bang his head against the wall over and over again. “Bad Dobby, bad Dobby, bad Dobby!”

“Dobby shut up and stop trying to give yourself a concussion!” hissed Elizabeth angrily and Dobby looked at Elizabeth strangely.

“Dobby is not understanding you, Miss, you were speaking in Parseltongue,” said Dobby in an awed voice, as he looked terrified. “Dobby advises Elizabeth Potter not to do that in front of other people, people could lock her up and do bad things to her, worse than what Master would be doing to Dobby if he found out that Dobby was visiting Elizabeth Potter.”

“Right, Dobby, just settle down and don’t try to bash your head in with something,” answered Elizabeth in a forced patient voice, trying not to alarm the elf again and get Vernon up here. “It’s obvious that you are here for a reason.”

It took Dobby several minutes to calm down, before he could speak to Elizabeth.

“Yes, Miss is not only a powerful witch but very smart as well, and Dobby must be telling her before Master finds out that Dobby has left,” answered Dobby as he looked around, as if his Master would jump out of the closet. “Dobby must tell her, even though he would be

beaten by Master's pimp cane, that Elizabeth Potter must not go back to Hogwarts!"

Elizabeth did a double take. She could not believe what she was hearing, why would she even think about doing that?

"What do you mean by that, Dobby?" demanded Elizabeth forcefully as Dobby took a step back. "And if you punish yourself again, I will throw you out that window."

"That being the third time that's been done to Dobby this week, but that's not important," said Dobby. "Dobby is here to warn Elizabeth Potter, even though it will have bad consequences if he's discovered, but it will be much worse if Elizabeth Potter is not knowing and she goes back to Hogwarts. She will be in mortal danger, because dark forces are plotting to eliminate her once and for all."

"Dark forces?" asked Elizabeth with a slight raise of her eyebrow.

"The darkest, they are dangerous, much more than even most full grown wizards can handle and if Elizabeth Potter goes back, she will be in mortal danger," said Dobby. "There is a chance that she might not survive the year at Hogwarts."

"Dobby, I could be in mortal danger by getting out of bed in the morning. There's always a chance I could trip and break my neck," said Elizabeth in a strained, quiet voice. "Besides, there is just as much of a chance that they could come here for me. If they wanted to kill me so badly, why must they be at Hogwarts? What's to stop them from killing me right here and now?"

"Nothing but there is much less of a chance that Elizabeth Potter will be in danger, if she stays at home with her relatives," answered Dobby swiftly, as he was rocking back and forth with a crazed expression on his face.

"Dobby, this place, it's far from home than you could ever realized, I'm miserable here," answered Elizabeth in a despondent voice.

“Hogwarts is a place where I have friends, even though someone’s been blocking any letters that they might send me.”

Dobby looked guilty at that for a brief second and Elizabeth put two and two together in her mind, before she rounded on Dobby, staring the house elf down, who cowered.

“You were the one who blocked my mail,” said Elizabeth, her green eyes flashing dangerously, as the house elf took a step back, trembling with fear. “Blocking my only line of communication to the outside world, how could you do that?”

“It was for the best, Dobby has your letters right here, all of them, every one of them,” answered Dobby as his eyes flashed with slight fear, as Elizabeth could be very intimidating when she was truthfully angry. “Please do not be mad at Dobby, he was only trying to protect you from the darkness.”

“You are to give me all my letters, stop blocking my mail, and leave here right now,” said Elizabeth in a quiet, dangerous voice, that intimidated the house elf. “Do you hear me, Dobby?”

“Dobby hears fine and will agree, if Elizabeth Potter agrees not to go to Hogwarts,” answered Dobby, as he looked at the Girl-Who-Lived with wide eyes.

“I have to go, I refuse to agree, now give me the mail or will find your Master and tell him what you’ve been up to,” said Elizabeth in a firm voice but Dobby was shaking his head side to side, before the door burst open and Dobby made his way out, where the Dursleys and the Masons were eating dinner. Elizabeth raced down the bottom of the stairs, before Dobby could do something that would get her in trouble. She stood at the bottom of the stairs, facing Dobby, a pleading look in her eyes “No, Dobby, get back here this instant.”

“Not until Elizabeth Potter agrees that she won’t go to Hogwarts,” replied Dobby in a low voice, as the Dursleys and the Masons ate, unaware of what was going on behind them, as Dobby levitated a



bowl right above their heads. "Miss must promise that she will not go."

"Dobby, no, please don't, I have to go, don't you see," answered Elizabeth, who attempted to pull out her wand, before Dobby did something that would end her life before her birthday.

"Dobby has no choice, he is sorry," answered Dobby mournfully, as he let the bowl drop, right on Mrs. Mason's head. Elizabeth winced, as the woman shrieked as the food splattered in every direction. Vernon gave a mighty bellow of surprise and turned, where he saw Elizabeth standing in the hallway with a horrified look in her face, wand in hand. She winced, when she looked at how bad it looked.

"Eh, sorry about that," chuckled Vernon in an uneasy voice but it was very strained, as he looked at Elizabeth's wand and she could see the anger flashing in his eyes. "That's my niece, we keep her upstairs, people tend to spook her, we must have forgotten to lock the door, thinks she's a witch you see."

"I don't know what you are trying to pull, Dursley," stated Mr. Mason in an angry voice. "Inviting us over, sucking up to us no doubt, it's obvious this attempt was not sincere and fabricating flimsy lies about this girl, to try and get yourself out of trouble. I don't feel comfortable about making a deal with you, my money is better invested elsewhere."

With that, the Masons left and Elizabeth cherished every step they took, because she knew the moment they left, she would be in real trouble. The door closed and Elizabeth looked alarmed, but at that moment, an owl flew through the window, causing Petunia to shriek in surprise. The owl appeared right in front of Elizabeth, dropping a note right in her hands. It then flew off as Vernon walked over to Elizabeth, a mad expression on his face and snatched the letter, reading it with a mad glint in his eyes.

"It says here that you're in trouble for doing magic during the holidays and if you do it one more time, you'll be expelled," said

Vernon wickedly with a manic glare in his eye. "Guess, you're in trouble now, girl."

Without another word, Vernon angrily grabbed Elizabeth by the arm, roughly pulling her upstairs towards her bedroom. Her uncle had never seemed more angry in his life and Elizabeth struggled, but Vernon threw open the door and threw Elizabeth onto her bed.

"You are to stay here and never leave this room again!" yelled Vernon. "I don't care what your freak friends say, you are not leaving this room and if you try and use your little hocus pocus to get yourself out, they'll kick you out of the freak school."

"You won't get away with this, you know," answered Elizabeth, unable to keep her temper in check. "I doubt a fat useless moron like yourself could be a match for anyone..."

"SHUT UP YOU STUPID WHORE!" growled Vernon as Elizabeth felt a large beefy fist connect with her face, as she dropped onto the bed. Blood dripped from her mouth as her jaw ached. "We've been putting up with your shit for eleven years and it's going to stop right now. You are going to earn your keep around here or you'll pay the price."

Elizabeth was on the bed, unable to move, unable to speak, but hating Vernon. The moment she had the chance, she would kill him, she would kill all three of them. In her mind, she visualized Vernon lying on the floor, in a pool of his own blood, his limbs ripped off. It was a glorious sight but sadly would never happen unless she got stronger.

She also was not all that fond of that stupid house elf and visualized a similar gory end for him as well. Vernon looked at her, a sadistic glint in his eyes.

"Enjoy the rest of your life," said Vernon wickedly as he grabbed Elizabeth's wand and attempted to snap it in half, but grunted when the shock had blasted him backwards, causing him to crash onto the floor, barely missing striking the back of the head against the edge of

the wall. That caused Elizabeth a small amount of amusement, as Vernon rubbed the back of his head, slowly, painfully getting back to his feet, before he threw the wand right on the floor of the room. "Not that it would do you much good anyway, considering you're on the bubble of being expelled."

Vernon stormed off as he closed the door and bolted it behind him. Elizabeth turned on her bed, massaging her sore jaw as she looked at the ceiling. Vernon had always belittled her, made snide comments about everything, and had of course withheld meals from her. This was the first time he had ever struck her in anger. Losing such a high profile business deal had pushed Vernon Dursley over the edge. She vowed to learn even more magic, so she could be stronger, people like Dursley or Dumbledore could not tell her what to do anymore. They would be taking orders from her.

-

Harry was worried beyond all belief. He had written to Elizabeth several times during the summer, and had not heard back. He had feared that Dumbledore had done something to block all lines of communication and he sat on the couch, in front of the fire, just thinking. He was really worried about his sister, she had been through a terrible ordeal last year with the vampires and now being sent back to the Dursleys despite evidence that she was not happy there. If it was up to Harry, Elizabeth would be taken from there immediately, even if it met they would have to constantly be on the run from Dumbledore. Harry's mother still attempted to get her out the legal way, but Harry had long since given up hope that the Ministry would get them out the legal way.

"Harry!" shouted Ginny's voice as Harry looked up, his friend was in the fire. "Dad just came home, I thought you might want to know something. Elizabeth has been given a warning for underage magic last night. It's just now spread through the Ministry."

"Great, the Dursleys must have done something to her, that she had to defend herself, to get a warning for underage magic," answered Harry as he sprung up, wand in hand, as he rushed forward, before

stopping and turning to Ginny. "Ginny, thanks for the heads up, something's really weird, considering she hasn't answered any of my letters this year."

"Mine neither," replied Ginny. "At first, I thought Errol was getting so senile that he took the letters to the wrong address, but now I'm not so sure."

"I'm going right there right now," stated Harry, as his mother was gone for the evening and Nymphadora was upstairs, enjoying her only day of the month off. They were going to get her tomorrow, but that was out the window. His sister was in danger now "I'll just get my broomstick and the spare one that I have and I'll go and get her out of there. I'll Floo you when I have her safely out of that prison, straight away, I promise."

"Okay, Harry, I'll talk to you soon then," replied Ginny as her face disappeared from the fire as Harry took a deep breath and moved upstairs to get what he needed, before he headed straight to Number Four Privet Drive. If Elizabeth had done magic, Harry had a feeling that it would trigger an angry reaction from Vernon, no matter how much he was warned to treat her decently.

"And where are you going Harry?" asked Nymphadora in a curious voice, causing Harry to stop as he had almost retrieved the broomstick.

"Elizabeth did magic outside of school, something very bad is going on, she did not answer any of my letters or Ginny's either for that matter, and now...I fear for her life, it happened yesterday, there's no time to waste, we've got to get her out of there immediately," said Harry quickly without taking a breath.

"And how can you do magic in a Muggle area, when you're underage as well?" asked Nymphadora. "I have to come with you Harry, besides as an Auror, even if I'm only in my second year of training, I have a bit more leeway of what I can do to those Muggles if they've done something wrong than you can."

Harry nodded, truthfully he had not thought about exactly how he was going to get Elizabeth out of there, other than the fact that he was going to get her out of there. As an after thought, Harry grabbed a camera from the side of the table. If there any evidence that Dursley had hurt her, he would not put it past Dumbledore to attempt to cover it up once he found out again it. Quickly, they made there way, there was very little time that they could afford to waste.

-

Elizabeth laid on the bed, looking at the ceiling of her completely pitch black room, sighing. Her jaw had mostly healed itself up but the remnants were still there. Dried up blood was on her pillow case and she looked forward, to see iron bars on the room. When she called Number Four Privet Drive a prison, she was using a figure of speech. The door was bolted shut, with a cat flap in the door and a plate right by the food of something that Petunia had cooked, so Elizabeth was keeping an eye on it. It was likely to have come alive and attack her. She wondered if the Dursleys would put poison in it but she disregarded that notion immediately. They wanted her alive so she could suffer slowly and perhaps be a depressive wreck by the time she was fifteen. Once again, she wondered what Dumbledore could have been thinking. Throwing her in Azkaban after her parents had died would have been a lot better than being sent here.

She was only allowed out of her room to do whatever chores her uncle had thought of and then her payment was the right to go to the bathroom and have a meal. It had only been a day and Elizabeth wondered how much longer it could have been before she would have cracked.

“Lizzie,” hissed a voice and Elizabeth weakly looked up to see Harry and Nymphadora outside of the window.

“ Harry, you’re here,” said Elizabeth, her spirits rising slightly. “Finally...I didn’t get any my letters...”

“I know, you can explain later,” said Harry, with a frown on his face from the outside, as he had saw the iron bars over the windows and clenched his fist.

“Stay there Elizabeth, we’re going to go there and get you right now,” said Nymphadora and Elizabeth looked up, nodding in a very weakened manner, before Nymphadora and Harry flew around the other side of the house.

“Bars on the windows, this is far worse than I thought, what could Dumbledore be thinking?” asked Harry.

“Not much obviously,” said Nymphadora shaking her head as they made their way to the front door. “Doesn’t matter, I’m going to send word to the Department of Magical Law Enforcement right away, before Dumbledore has a chance to meddle in this, once we get her out of there.”

Harry nodded as the door swung open, allowing the two to enter. Nymphadora held up her wand, as footsteps were heard from the bottom of the stairs and they froze. They saw the form of Vernon Dursley at the top of the stairs and his eyes widened.

“Burglars, get out of my house before I call the police!” shouted Vernon as his face became purple. “Don’t you dare come any step further, I have a gun, do you hear me?”

“Hello, Dursley,” said Harry as he made his way up the stairs and Vernon backed against the wall before he recognized Harry. “Can’t say it’s nice to see you again.”

“YOU!” shouted Vernon in an angry voice as he charged Harry, a comical sight but a tripping charm put Vernon down. Vernon fell flat on his face, a sickening crack echoing throughout the hallway as blood splattered from his nose. Vernon had tried to get up but seconds later, he was wrapped up with ropes. “You no good, good for nothing little...”

“Just be quiet Dursley,” said Nymphadora, as she brandished her wand towards him, sparks flying out of it, as Vernon twitched. “We’re here to get Elizabeth right now and...”

“THE GIRL RUINED EVERYTHING!” thundered Vernon, his face growing purpler as the ropes twitched against him.

“If you know what’s good for you, you will not say one more word,” said Nymphadora eyes narrowly but Vernon just glared at him as she moved over to the door, as Harry took pictures of the evidence, seeing the cat flap on the door, frowning. The door swung open as Nymphadora opened the door, seeing Elizabeth on the bed, who looked to be barely able to move.

“Lizzie!” shouted Harry in a horrified voice, it was much worse than what he could see through the window. Her jaw looked bruised beyond belief.

“Harry, please get me out of here, I don’t give a damn what Dumbledore says,” answered Lizzie weakly, as she wrapped her arms around Harry’s neck, allowing him to gently lift her up. It sickened Harry slightly to see how light she was. Supermodels ate more than she was allowed to here and even with a whole year of Hogwarts meals, the damage was still obviously there.

“Don’t worry, we’re going to get you out, we got a broomstick for, if you think you can fly,” said Harry and Elizabeth nodded weakly, as she clung onto Harry tightly. “Just stay between myself and Dora, we won’t let you fall.”

“There, if anyone attempts to tamper with the evidence, the Ministry will be called here immediately, but I still have to file a proper report,” said Nymphadora as they assisted Elizabeth outside. “We’re going to get her straight to St. Mungos first, hopefully no one causes a scene about the Girl-Who-Lived being there, and then we can call home for Mum, to tell her what happened.”

Harry nodded as they mounted their broomsticks, before they slowly made their way up into the night.

-

Albus Dumbledore was having a bad day. A really bad day, the fact that Fudge had called him to the Ministry no less than three times and he had very few choices for Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher. It seemed to people did not want the job for some reason, perhaps the fact that the previous teacher was murdered by a vampire.

At that point, the perfect end to a not so perfect day happened as an owl that belonged to Andromeda Black appeared, with a bright red envelope clutched in its beak. The owl dropped the envelope which smoked and before Dumbledore could do anything, it burst open, revealing the magically amplified voice of Harry Black, producing a howler that would make Molly Weasley curl up in a fetal ball in terror.

DUMBLEDORE! THIS IS THE LAST STRAW! I DON'T CARE WHAT REASONS YOU HAVE FOR ELIZABETH GOING TO THE DURSLEYS, THEY ARE NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO KEEP HERE THERE AFTER WHAT WE DISCOVERED JUST A COUPLE OF HOURS AGO! THAT FAT BASTARD DURSLEY BROKE HER JAW AND PUT BARS ON HER WINDOW! JUST BECAUSE THE FAT BUFFOON SHE SCREWED UP A BUSINESS DEAL OF HIS! HE IS NOT FIT TO RAISE A GOLDFISH MUCH LESS A HUMAN BEING! HELL, I DOUBT HE'S EVEN FIT TO RAISE HIS OWN SON, WHICH MIGHT ACTUALLY BE LOWER THAN A GOLDFISH ON THE EVOLUTIONARY SCALE. A COMPLAINT HAS BEEN FILED WITH THE WIZENGAMOT AND ELIZABETH WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE DURSLEYS. IF YOU MEDDLE IN ANYWAY, I WILL RELEASE INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL LIFE THAT WILL RUIN YOUR REPUTATION AND STANDING IN THE WIZARDING WORLD. DO NOT TEST ME DUMBLEDORE, I'VE GIVEN THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT ONCE TOO OFTEN!

Dumbledore sat, as he watched eleven years of well placed plans crumple into dust. He had assured Andromeda that Elizabeth would be safe and now Vernon had crossed the line. Dumbledore was also worried about what information had obtained that could ruin him. It could be any number of things. Dumbledore had many skeletons that he would have liked to remain in the closet.



The Hogwarts Headmaster felt each and every one of his hundred plus years as he wondered where he had went wrong with Elizabeth.

-

Right now, Luna, Ginny, Draco, and Harry were sitting Harry's bedroom, Elizabeth sleeping in the guest bedroom right now.

"So, Elizabeth's alright," summarized Luna.

"Yes, all she needs is sleep, rest, and anyone with the last name Dursley to be buried alive," said Harry bitterly. "I sent Turpin and Patil letters, explaining to them what happened, why Elizabeth could not write them back."

"You never said who stopped her letters through," said Draco.

"Oh it was a house elf, Lizzie mentioned he was a bit of a nutter and punished himself a lot," said Harry.

"Sounds a bit like your elf, Draco," remarked Ginny.

"Yes it does," said Draco slowly. "Was there anything else that Elizabeth said about the elf?"

"Oh, he seemed to worship her," said Harry and Draco just rolled his eyes.

"I was afraid of that," said Draco before clearing his throat. "DOBBY!"

Dobby appeared seconds later with a light pop.

"Master Draco called Dobby?" questioned the house elf.

"Did you visit Elizabeth Potter's house and do something to make the Ministry think she performed magic?" demanded Draco.

“Dobby is sorry, but it must be done, Elizabeth Potter is in grave danger,” said Dobby.

“You will be too if you don’t give a good explanation, Dobby,” said Draco his eyes narrowed. “Do you even think? You could have gotten her killed.”

“No, sir, no Master Draco, not getting her killed, Dobby was trying to save her from an awful fate,” answered Dobby in a frantic voice.

“What kind of awful fate?” asked Harry, fingers twitching slightly, as he looked at Dobby but the house elf remained silent, refusing to speak.

“Answer Harry you impudent creature,” demanded Draco roughly, causing Dobby to take a step back fearfully. “And don’t stall for time by punishing yourself.”

“Dobby cannot be saying, he does not know the specifics even,” said Dobby.

“Well do know this, Dobby, you are forbidden to come near Elizabeth from this point forward,” said Draco and Dobby nodded, looking about ready to protest but no sound came out of his mouth. “And go punish yourself. Be creative with it too.”

Dobby disappeared with a pop as they continued talking as if he had not been there at all.

“We’re going to try and get Elizabeth out of there, this time we have solid evidence, they have to agree with us,” said Harry.

“I don’t see how the Ministry could deny you to get her out,” said Ginny but there was a distinct lack of conviction in her voice.

“Very easily, considering the fact the Ministry will stall forever to get the ball rolling, I sometimes think they are threatened by her power

after she defeated You-Know-Who and want to keep her below them, where they can easily control her,” said Draco.

“Jealousy is such a shameful addiction, it is gripping the world and causing much hysteria,” said Luna. “Only with hard work can it be overcome and beaten.”

“Well said Luna,” said Harry, as he exchanged looks with Ginny and Draco, but they all got what Luna was saying. She always made sense in her own unique way.

-

It had been a few days since Elizabeth had been saved by the Dursleys. Right now, after evidence had been submitted to the Ministry about her predicament this summer and a motion to get her removed from their custody of her hated relatives. While she was confident that Harry and his family would do everything to help her, she was not so confident about the justice system of the Wizarding World. Or the Wizarding World in general. Things that she had learned over her first year had told her how backwards everything was. She enjoyed learning magic, spending time with her friends, and flying, even though Quidditch was a stupid sport, she still loved flying.

As she sat down, she was the latest edition of the Daily Prophet and spotted something that did not improve her opinion of the Wizarding World in the slightest.

Scandal Involving the Girl Who Lived:

By Special Correspondent for the Daily Prophet, Rita Skeeter

Child abuse is an invention of the Muggle World. It is unheard of in the Wizarding World, due to the parents of young witches and wizards not wanting to chance bursts of uncontrolled magic. Yet, now and again, a case of a Muggle raised magical child is harmed by their guardian and I say without hesitation that this may be the most high profile example. Word has reached us that Elizabeth Potter, also

known as the Girl-Who-Lived, the alleged defeater of He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named, has apparently had to be rescued from her home after being assaulted by her Muggle uncle, Vernon Dursley. Young Miss Potter allowed herself to be victimized by Dursley, being thrown down onto her bed and struck in the mouth. At least that's what the official report filed to the Department of Magical Law Enforcement. This reporter must wonder what else Miss Potter had allowed her uncle to do to her in that bedroom. Also, we must wonder if our savior is adept to fulfill her obligations to the Wizarding World. If she is unable to defend herself against her middle aged and overweight Muggle uncle, I fear that she might not be able to handle herself against a real threat. We hope that Elizabeth Potter works hard to aspire to perform to the standards with expect of her as the Girl-Who-Lived and not be this weak in the future.

Elizabeth's hands were shaking madly as she stopped reading the paper the paper.

"Why do these people think I owe them anything?" demanded Elizabeth angrily. "I don't even remember anything about what happened, my parents died, I had no choice, Voldemort tried to murder me, but I saved them and they think I owe them!"

"Lizzie, what's the matter, the windows are rattling," said Harry, who was just walking into the kitchen.

"Read," said Elizabeth, biting her lip as she handed Harry the paper and Harry read it.

"Rita Skeeter is one of those people who you can do without, Lizzie, don't let her opinions get to you" said Harry after he concluded the article. "She thrives on controversy, don't be too upset, she rips on everyone."

"Yes, but I think more people who believe that about me," said Elizabeth.

“Perhaps, but as I said, they’re not important, what’s most important is what you think and what the people that care about you think,” said Harry.

Elizabeth just sat there. She knew Harry was right but not everyone thought like that. The word “weak” continued to flash through her mind, like an annoying beacon. It kept taunting her, mocking her, not letting up for a second and even when she put on a façade of not letting in it effect her,

-

The booklists had arrived the next day and they made a trip to Diagon Alley to pick up supplies for the next year. Elizabeth, Harry, Nymphadora, and Andromeda moved their way through a crowd right by Flourish and Blotts.

“What’s the hold up anyway?” asked Nymphadora as she looked around, as hordes of middle aged woman moved through.

“That might be your explanation right now,” said Andromeda as she craned her neck over the crowds and a slightly obscured sign revealed the cause of the crowd. “Gilderoy Lockhart, signing copies of his autobiography Magical Me, from noon to three.”

“Lockhart, oh no,” said Harry who looked sickened at the very sound of that name. It was bad enough that every single book that was required for Defense Against the Dark Arts this year was a Lockhart book. Seeing the idiot in person was far worse.

“Who is Lockhart?” asked Elizabeth curiously, wondering what could have gotten Harry so upset.

“A overhyped ponce who’s only purpose is to sell books that anyone with half of a brain that can find inaccuracies in,” said Ginny as she walked over, rolling her eyes. “I snuck about from Mum, she’s drooling over Lockhart right now. I almost stayed, because it looks like Dad might kill Lockhart because of it but Lockhart’s teeth were giving me a headache.”

“Now that sounds like it might be worth stomaching him for a few minutes,” said Harry with a smirk as he moved through the crowd, with Elizabeth and Ginny on either side of him, with Andromeda and Nymphadora following them. Ron, Percy, Fred, and George were visible, trying to move through the stores to get the books required, with their parents on the side.

“Out of the way, now, this is for the Daily Prophet!” shouted a photographer as he moved through, nearly knocking Elizabeth to the ground.

“Watch where you’re going!” snapped Elizabeth angrily, as she adjusted her stance Lockhart looked up to see the commotion, before he brightened.

“Well Elizabeth Potter, what a surprise this is!” shouted Lockhart with a smile and he got up, moving through the crowd, several witches looking happy as Lockhart brushed against them, while several other members of the crowd looked at Elizabeth, whispering at her as Lockhart put his arm around Elizabeth.

“Get your hands off of me,” said Elizabeth through gritted teeth, something about how this guy was always smiling was giving her a very creepy vibe as he attempted to drag her over.

“Come on now Elizabeth, big smile, together you and I are worth the front...ow!” winced Lockhart as someone had roughly stomped on his foot and Elizabeth had quickly pulled herself away from him. Ginny stood off to the side, whistling nonchalantly, as her mother was giving her a scandalized look but wisely did not make a scene, as Lockhart limped around injured “Oh, well I see she’s a bit shy, to be expected, but I suppose this will be the perfect opening to give an announcement that I had been sitting on for quite some time.”

Harry sat, wishing that a meteor would just strike Lockhart down and take him out for good.

“When young Elizabeth walked into my shop, she was only hoping to purchase a copy of my autobiography which she will be getting soon, free of charge I might add,” said Lockhart, as he beamed at Elizabeth, who shuddered. “But Elizabeth and the rest of her class will be getting much more than my autobiography; they will be getting the real magical me, as I will be teaching Defense Against the Dark Arts for the next year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.”

“No!” cried Ginny in a mortified voice but she was drowned out by the excited squeals that filled Flourish and Blotts and Harry seemed to be unable to speak, struck dumb by the shock. Surely, Dumbledore could have done better. It took about a minute before Harry could speak.

“Just one thing, was Longbottom’s toad unavailable?” asked Harry in disgust as he moved over to join Elizabeth who was being presented with all of his books, as she shifted them into a basket before moving over to join Harry and Ginny.

“Free of charge, but I still think I’m getting ripped off for some reason,” said Elizabeth causing Harry and Ginny to laugh.

“Well, Potter, can’t you stay out of trouble for even five minutes,” drawled a voice as they turned around, to see Draco standing there and off in the distance, they saw Lucius Malfoy in the distance. “Even when you walk into the bookshop you turn heads, no matter how much you try not to.”

“What are you doing here Malfoy?” demanded Ron as he moved over.

“Shopping Weasley, although I do wonder what you’ve had to do to afford all of those Lockhart books, they don’t come cheap,” said Draco in a bored voice and Ron reached forward, to grab Draco by the robes.

“What is this, Draco?” asked Lucius, as he walked over, eyes on Ron.

“Just greeting a classmate, Father,” said Draco.

“Ah yes, one of the many Weasleys,” said Lucius, a bit of contempt obvious in his voice.

“What’s going on here?” asked Arthur as he moved over, before his eyes narrowed. “Oh, it’s you, Lucius.”

“Hello, Arthur,” replied Lucius in a smooth tone of voice. “I’ve heard all these rumors about the amount of charmed Muggle appliances going up and your department having to put in more time than usual. I do hope you are being paid overtime to compensate for your extra work.”

Lucius took a good look at the faded second hand robes that the Weasley children were wearing.

“Then again, it is an even bigger shame that you’re not getting paid to even be an excuse to wizard kind and by the looks of things, your children are carrying on that pitiful tradition. Well at least your wife is eating well,” muttered Lucius and seconds later, Arthur’s fist slammed right into Lucius’s face. Molly gave a gasp, as the two wizards were trading punches, wands knocked to the side and Elizabeth’s basket was knocked out of her hands. The crowd gasped, as Lockhart looked up, watching the fight intently.

“He’ll love this, imagine the publicity,” said Ginny before she watched as Lucius dropped to the ground and rolled over on his stomach as the security wizards rushed over to attempt to restrain Arthur.

“Father cannot take a punch,” commented Draco lightly, as he watched over, sticking out his hand, but Lucius shrugged it off.

“I am fine Draco,” responded Lucius, but the black eye told a different story, but he put all of Elizabeth’s books back into the basket. “There you are, Miss Potter, I hope you don’t judge all us purebloods by that barbaric display.”



“Don’t worry, I don’t Mr. Malfoy,” said Elizabeth as she stood there, she knew all purebloods were not as pompous as Draco’s father, as Lucius walked over to the security wizard, saying something to him.

“Are you really going to touch those books if my father has been in close proximity to them?” asked Draco quietly, as he leaned over towards Elizabeth.

“Why not?” questioned Elizabeth looking rather skeptical at Draco’s distrust of his own father. “Would your father really curse a book in front of all of these witnesses and the press? Would he think he could get away with it?”

“Do you really want the answers to those questions?” asked Draco but before Elizabeth could say anything, Lucius called him over and Draco walked off.

“Let’s get our books and get out of here, Lizzie, the less time we have to stay in this place, the better,” said Harry and Elizabeth nodded, before they paid for their purchases and left.

-

Elizabeth was in bedroom she stayed in, unpacking her books. There was at least a half of a dozen pictures of Lockhart staring at her, curling their hair, and winking. Elizabeth shuddered, before she quickly shoved the books away into her trunk. This was going to be a long year.

Yet, she came across a small black book that she had not seen previously. She wondered if had dropped in during the fight. Looking at it briefly, it appeared to be a diary of some sort. The letters “T.M. Riddle” was on the spine and she flipped through the diary, but there was no writing. She had half the mind to throw it away, she thought it was stupid to write in a diary anyway but then at that instant as she held the diary, she felt a sudden desire to write in it. It might be therapeutic to write down all of her thoughts in the diary after all that happened recently with Dursley and Dumbledore. She had some frustrations to vent about those two people, among several others in

the Wizarding World and it might ease up stress to write about it in a diary. She would just have to secure it to make sure no one could find it and read it.

After all, what harm could come from writing in a simple diary?

## Chapter Eleven: Stalkers and Diaries

Elizabeth sat on the side of the bed with her newly acquired diary, a bottle of ink on one side and a quill on the other side. She dipped the quill into the ink. It was late at night but she was bored and after looking through the Lockhart books, she had the compulsion to write in the diary, to get some frustrations off her chest.

How anyone could think that Lockhart knows anything about anything is baffling to me. I mean, I doubt the guy could even spell his own name without assistance. Those books are so full of errors, it's hard to figure out where exactly to begin. I think his publisher laughs all the way to the bank at the people he's suckered into buying that drivel.

Elizabeth sat back to think and much to her surprise, the writing had sucked back into the diary. She blinked, wondering what kind of diary this was. Yet, surprisingly, writing began to appear in the diary.

Sounds like the Wizarding World is just as full as people who are gullible during my time at Hogwarts, if people are willing to buy something that is obviously so wrong.

Elizabeth paused, she held her quill, unable to determine what had happened, as more writing appeared on the pages of the diary.

I know you're shocked at what just happened. I'm a rare item in that I'm not only a diary that you can write your thoughts down in but I can also reply to what you've written. Not only that, but your thoughts remain private, so no one could read them and can use them for blackmail material.

Elizabeth sat, she scoffed at the notion of trusting an object that had a mind of its own but somehow, she was drawn to write in the diary once again.

I'm sorry, but I don't know if I can trust a diary that has a mind of its own.

The words she had written had been sucked into the diary and there was a pause, almost if the diary was formulating a response to what she said.

Quite understandable, but trust is not something that you have to worry about. After all I am a diary, what could I do to you?

Elizabeth paused before she lifted her quill and began to write in the diary herself

All sorts of things, there could be a number of curses, enchantments, the fact that I never wanted to write in a diary before did clue me in on the fact that something is the matter. Then again, I never thought I would have friends before too, but maybe other things can change as well.

Promptly, the diary had written back.

You seem like an intelligent person, I bet you would like to learn new, unique magic that traditional education will not offer you. What is your name anyway?

Elizabeth placed the quill to the parchment in the diary, her reservations about the diary began to fade away, there seemed to be no danger. Besides, the prospect of learning magic that even an education had Hogwarts did not offer seemed rather appealing to her.

Elizabeth Potter and yes, you would be correct in your assumption that I would be willing to learn new magic. Especially with how backwards the Wizarding World tends to turn out.

The diary absorbed what she had said before it had responded.

It seems like it had regressed even further since my time at Hogwarts. Yes, I was a Hogwarts student and up until when this diary was made, I was. I have no idea what came of my human counterpart, but I am Tom, Tom Riddle.

Elizabeth paused as she looked at the writing. Something about that name seemed to be familiar, almost as if it was someone that she

had met a long time ago, but the memory was foggy. For now, she decided to just pass it off as a coincidence.

You mentioned that you did not have any friends for a while. Might I ask why? You don't have to answer, but I'm just curious.

She stood there and wondered exactly how much she should tell Tom but she placed her quill in the ink bottle, before she wrote, as she choose her words very carefully.

It's just that for ten years, I lived with my aunt, uncle, and cousin. My cousin seemed to discourage anyone from being my friends, and my aunt and uncle did nothing to stop him. He had his own gang of bullies. I was so glad when I found out I was a witch, but I was upset when Dudley was a wizard as well. I'm glad he got expelled after he failed everything in his first year, serves him right.

The diary paused, once again as if it digested what Elizabeth had written.

So, you do have friends now don't you. Friends that will stick by you no matter what.

She read the writing before she began to compose her response to Tom.

Absolutely, I would not trade them for anything in the world. All of them, Lisa, Padma, Draco, and Harry, even Luna and Ginny, despite the fact I haven't got to know them as well but I hope to in time. They've all been really great, it just makes learning magic worthwhile even though some of the people who run it might not be as worthwhile.

The writing in the diary slowly faded away, as Elizabeth sat there to wait for Tom to write back. She eagerly awaited his response and seconds later Tom did not disappoint her by promptly writing back.

Exactly who are some of the people that frustrate you the most, Elizabeth? There must be a face to put with these negative feelings that you seem to have.

Elizabeth quickly responded, she had one person in particular that she had to vent her frustrations on.

Dumbledore, it's all down to Dumbledore. He seems to think he can do wrong and most of the world who has the power to do anything does. He put me with the Dursleys, despite the fact I've complained several times about being there and attempted to run away from home, but I always got returned, with little memory of had. After I read about memory charms, it's obvious who was behind this, I mean it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure this out. Harry's been a great help, but let's face it, he's only twelve just like me. There's only so much he can do against someone like Dumbledore, but still his help is much appreciated, I don't know what I'd do without him.

The writing once again faded, before it was replaced by the response of Tom.

Dumbledore? As in Albus Dumbledore, the Transfiguration Teacher or at least who he was during my time. It appears that he has moved up in the world since then.

Elizabeth promptly dipped her quill in the response, before she touched onto the paper.

Yes, moved up is a good way to describe it, he's now the Headmaster of Hogwarts. Not to mention the Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot and a bunch of other titles that is slipping my mind. He has too much power.

Once again, there was a pause and Elizabeth could almost sense the diary thinking intently before Tom had formulated his response. Sure enough, after about thirty seconds, words began to write themselves on the paper, for the Girl-Who-Lived to read.

Indeed, Dumbledore has seemed to overstep his bounds slightly when he was a Transfiguration teacher and it appears that his control issues have only worsened with time, not to mention more power. Now, you've mentioned Harry, he seems like he's someone special to you.

Elizabeth promptly wrote back to Tom.

Well he is but not in the way most would think. He's like the brother I never had, I guess. There are things that I've shared with him that I've never shared with my other friends and may never share. He's never breached my trust either. I don't know where I would be without Harry, he was my guide into the Wizarding World and he kept me on the straight and narrow path, not to be blinded by my fame or anything like that.

Much to her surprise, this was Tom's shortest time to respond yet.

Fame?

Elizabeth grabbed her quill and furiously scribbled a return message, she mentally kicked herself for saying way too much.

It's not something I like talking about, I was famous because my parents died and I lived. Pretty stupid thing to be famous for, huh, and it gave me the name the Girl-Who-Lived as well. A dark wizard attacked them one night and I was just fortunate enough to survive. With a stupid lightning bolt scar on my forehead and a bunch of ignorant admirers that would turn at me the minute the wind change. Just like they did when that stupid story that woman wrote came out, as much as I love Hogwarts, I can't say I'm not apprehensive about returning just a little bit.

Her writing vanished from the pages of the diary and was replaced by a brief response by Tom.

Yes, fame can be a fleeting thing. Do not put too much stock into it, but rather your own abilities.

Before Elizabeth could respond, Riddle had written one more line, almost as an afterthought.

If you don't mind me for asking, what was the name of the Dark Lord you defeated?

Elizabeth was taken back by the curiosity that Tom had expressed but saw no reason to decline telling him the name.

The person I beat was called Lord Voldemort. Yeah, I know, he had a pretty stupid name but he was powerful. Of course, he couldn't have been that powerful if he got blasted into dust by a one year old girl. Perhaps he killed some people, but he must have been able to have enough followers to maintain fear even after he's gone, with people not wanting to say his name. Still, I think he was a bit of a flash in the pan, that really wasn't anything special.

The diary paused and Elizabeth wondered if it had stopped working due to some magical glitch. She whacked the side of the diary and one word appeared on it.

Indeed.

Footsteps were heard and Elizabeth quickly took the diary, before she slid it back into her bag. Her instincts told her that it would not be wise for her to be seen with a diary that wrote back. In fact, if Tom had not told her he knew powerful magical knowledge, Elizabeth would have chucked the diary in the trash. However, she was tempted by the prospect of knowledge, especially to be a match for Dumbledore and make him pay for the eleven years of hell she endured at the Dursleys. If she needed to use Tom to vent her frustrations, what did it matter? He was only a diary, it was not like he had any feelings.

-

Inside the diary, the sixteen year old Horcrux of Tom Riddle was surprised when his conscience was awoken by a powerful young witch writing in the diary. The more she wrote, the more he was intrigued, especially the last piece of information. The witch could not have been any more than twelve or thirteen, but she spoke of defeating Lord Voldemort. A name that Tom had used only among his closest friends at Hogwarts and if he would have to guess, a name that he used long afterwards to strike fear into the hearts of wizards. He had no idea how much time had passed since he had been in the diary, but he intended to use this Elizabeth Potter to find out



everything he could about the outside world. Dumbledore, the Transfiguration Professor during his time, had become Hogwarts Headmaster. That certainly complicated Tom's plans somewhat, but perhaps if he could encourage the girl's loathing for Dumbledore to a certain extreme, she might manage to eliminate him. It was a stretch, but Tom thrived on doing the impossible. He had made a Horcrux when he was sixteen years old. That fact alone had to count for something.

As much as he loathed to admit so, Tom was intrigued by this Elizabeth Potter girl. She was bold, slightly arrogant, and craved power. In fact, she had to have something, if she beat his future self when she was one year old. Of course, it could have been that Tom had made an error, perhaps making seven Horcruxes was not the best idea. Perhaps it diluted his power and caused a mistake. He would have to prod the girl for more answers but do it in a discrete way. He had fully expected to fully sink his influence into her on the first time, but he could just barely gain her trust enough for her not to dispose of the diary. Tom also sensed something akin to familiarity within the girl, he had rarely been curious about another human being, only about power, but yet something about Elizabeth Potter intrigued him. She was powerful enough to use as a gateway from the diary back into the real world.

All Tom had to do was wait, he would have his return and it mattered little about what his future self did, because he would break free from the diary and rule the world. All would learn to fear the name Lord Voldemort. He would reclaim power and rule over all.

-

It was time to leave on the Hogwarts Express for another year at Hogwarts. Harry walked forward with Elizabeth slightly in front of him, his mother bringing up the rear. Quite frankly, he was slightly worried about his sister's mental state, she was acting moody and irritable after that first article that Rita Skeeter had written about her and two more had come out. The last one was the worst, it suggested that she would be institutionalized for her own good, because she might have suffered severe mental damage. Harry tried to convince his sister that was just how Rita wrote her articles.

“Harry! Elizabeth!” shouted an excited voice and Harry and Elizabeth moved over to see Ginny standing right by the entrance, along with Luna. The other Weasleys were not too far along, Mrs. Weasley argued with the Twins, no doubt about a prank she overheard them planning.

“Hi Ginny, Luna, how are you two doing?” asked Harry.

“Pretty good actually, it’s been an interesting summer,” said Luna calmly as she looked at Elizabeth. “I wouldn’t put too much stock into articles written by a tabloid like the Daily Prophet anyway.”

“I agree with Luna, especially if they’re by Rita Skeeter,” answered Ginny as she looked at Elizabeth who sighed.

“I know, believe me, Harry’s told me the same thing, but I can’t say this year’s going to be a pleasant one,” said Elizabeth who had wrote to Tom talking about the articles when Harry or anyone else for that matter had not been present. He had said the Wizarding World was full of parasites that preyed on those who put themselves across as weak and that just prompted Elizabeth to learn even more magic. “So what house do you two think you’re going to be in?”

“Well my entire Weasley family’s been in Gryffindor for at least the last five hundred years,” said Ginny slowly but she nodded her head. “You never know if I’d end somewhere else or not. It’s up to wherever the Sorting Hat wants to put me.”

“I’d like to think my mind to be more complex than anything a mere article of clothing can figure out,” said Luna dreamily. “Of course the article might be enchanted, but still, it’s just a hat.”

“Yes, but have I mentioned how stupid it is to stereotype what people are at the age of eleven?” asked Harry.

“About every other time you see us, but that’s beside the point,” drawled Draco as he had just walked up. “Elizabeth, you just very nearly dodged a bullet. Despite the fact that I gave him strict orders, I

just barely managed to stop Dobby from stopping you from going to Hogwarts. Of course, that blasted elf would have to find a loophole in my orders and he tried to seal the barrier shut. Technically he would not be directly interfering with you, just the ability to pass through."

"Thanks Draco, it's a wonder you caught him," said Elizabeth.

"For sure, you might have had to go to school in that flying car that Ginny's father enchanted," answered Luna in a dreamy voice.

"Your dad enchanted a car to fly?" asked Elizabeth.

"He did," said Ginny with a smile as she shook her head. "I don't know why, the law says that he couldn't use it anyway."

"Ah yes, but he could take it apart and enchant it, but only if he had no intention to use it," said Draco nodding his head, with a slightly sliver of respect towards Ginny's father. It was not much, but still, he had to give the eccentric middle aged man credit. "It just goes to show you your father has more brains than myself or anyone else gives him credit for. He tends to have his moments."

"Speaking of fathers, where is old Lucius anyway?" asked Ginny.

"Who knows, he's not here, that's all I really care about," stated Draco with a shrug, as his father had said something about Ministry business and his mother was busy overseeing another big dinner party, the third one this month. So she could not see him off for his journey to Hogwarts.

"You'd think he was up to something," said Harry in an off handed manner.

"My father's always up to something, he wouldn't be my father if he wasn't," said Draco in a bored voice as he looked with the others, before he checked his watch. "Two minutes until the train is going to leave, we better get on board."

“No kidding, everyone’s gong to board at once,” said Harry, as he saw more people pour through the barrier to board the train for Hogwarts. Quickly, they hauled their trunks on board, as more people ran through, despite the fact that they were running late. It was amazing that despite the fact the train left at precisely eleven in the morning, a good portion of the people from the school still decided to wait until the last minute.

“I’ll see you guys later, I’m going to find Lisa and Padma,” said Elizabeth as she waved to Luna, Ginny, and Draco.

“Okay, bye, Lizzie, we’ll all talk to you when we get to Hogwarts,” answered Harry as he watched his sister move off, as he turned to his friends and they went off in their separate ways to find their own compartment.

-

“Liz, over here!” called Lisa as she sat in the compartment with Padma and Elizabeth breathed a sigh of relief, she was wondering if they had both missed the train. Quickly, she dragged her trunk over and levitated it with the other trunks of the girls. Quickly, Elizabeth sat down with Padma and Lisa.

“We thought we might have missed you, we didn’t see you on the platform,” added Padma.

“Ran a bit later than that I thought I was going to be when I had wrote to you the other day,” said Elizabeth. “I’m really sorry about not responding to any of your letters at the beginning of the summer.”

“No problem, who could have expected that a house elf would be blocking your mail, I mean it’s odd that they would act like that,” said Lisa. “I feared at first your relatives would have done something despite the warning Harry had given them but...”

“I know,” said Elizabeth.

“The bright side is, if you can find a bright side to what happened, is that at least you’re be taken away from your relatives,” said Lisa in a reassuring voice.

“The evidence is so strong that even Dumbledore won’t be able to explain it away,” added Padma. “Any idea when the hearing about that is going to happen.”

“I haven’t got the slightest idea at all,” responded Elizabeth with a shrug, as Harry had warned her that the Wizengamot would try and stall it for the last minute. He pretty much thought that there were other people than Dumbledore that would want to keep her at the Dursleys. Given the fact there were still some people who had supported Voldemort out there, Elizabeth was far from surprised.

“Well don’t worry, they can’t hold it off for long and you’ll never have to return to the Dursleys,” said Lisa with a reassuring smile and Elizabeth just nodded numbly. Despite the fact she wanted to believe that she would be away from the Dursleys for good, the fact remained that the public’s perception of her were tainted by Rita Skeeter’s articles that painted her as the villain slightly in this entire debacle.

“I just hope that’s the case, it might end badly if I’m kept there one more minute,” muttered Elizabeth more to herself than to the others. She had recalled her recurring fantasies of seeing all three of the Dursleys on the ground, broken, beaten, bloody, and begging for her mercy, which she did not give. They had pushed her too far and a part of her realized that this was not healthy for a twelve year old girl. However, what was the chance she would do some of the things she did in her dreams in the real world?

-

The sorting went by without too much problems. Last year, the Girl-Who-Lived was sorted and thus everyone was excited. This year it was just another routine part of the school year at Hogwarts. Luna had spent a long time up with the Sorting Hat, as it appeared to struggle to find the place to put her. Eventually, it went towards Ravenclaw, which pleased Elizabeth. It was nice to have another

friend so close by in Ravenclaw. Still, some of the looks that the other first year girls gave Luna unsettled Elizabeth slightly. It was similar to many of the looks Dudley and his gang gave her in primary school before they had bullied her. Sure, Luna was a bit odd, but really she was alright. Genius and insanity did tend to blend together after a time.

“Welcome to Ravenclaw Luna,” said Elizabeth. “I think you’re do great here.”

“The Sorting Hat thought so as well,” replied Luna dreamily. “It’s nice to receive two opinions that I respect the most.”

“See, Liz, your opinion is as important as an ancient talking hat that has sat on the heads of millions of students,” said Padma.

“When you put it that way, that’s just creepy,” said Lisa with a shudder. “I hope they use a scouring charm on that thing.”

“Actually a variety of charms that things such as lice that enter the inside of the hat are killed and vaporized immediately,” answered Luna. “It’s quite lucky when that happens, because the hat can’t brainwash students into taking over the world.”

“Yes, that’s quite lucky, I always knew there was something shifty about that hat,” said Lisa as Padma and Elizabeth both looked slightly amused.

The continued to watch the sorting, as more and more scared first years moved up to get their names called. The last one was Ginny and Hat had almost immediately put her in Gryffindor which seemed to annoy Ginny, as she looked towards the Hufflepuff table and Harry, who just shrugged before Ginny walked over where her twin brothers were cheering excitedly. It was obvious to Elizabeth that Ginny did not want to be in the same house as her brothers and given the lack of class that they exhibited, she did have a good point.

“Good evening and welcome to another year at Hogwarts!” called Dumbledore in a booming voice. Elizabeth looked slightly away from

Dumbledore, she could not stomach to look at the old man right now after all he had done. "The time for talking will happen soon enough but now is the time to eat. So tuck in!"

One thing was better about Hogwarts than anything else and that was the food. Elizabeth piled up food on her plate, so she could fill up on all the great food. As Nymphadora had said over the holidays, no one can cook better than a Hogwarts house elf.

After the feast, Elizabeth was in an excellent mood. Not even Lockhart's ultra cheesy expression that he had on his face when Dumbledore introduced him and the subsequent swooning of many of the girls at his smile. Elizabeth had a strong temptation to knock off of his teeth out on principal, after how many mistakes he made in his books, but she resisted the temptation. Something told her that Lockhart would not be as good of a teacher as Professor Savannah was last year. Thoughts of Savannah had brought Elizabeth back to thoughts on her grandmother and she hoped she had managed to find shelter under ground. The fact there was no news of the capture or death of a notorious vampire queen was actually good news.

-

Elizabeth, Lisa, and Padma were making their way to Charms class when a mousy little first year student stood in front of there.

"Do you need directions somewhere?" asked Lisa but the first year shook his head.

"Hi, Elizabeth!" shouted the first year in an excited voice, that made the Girl-Who-Lived wonder if he had ingested a massive amount of sugar before they met. "I'm Colin Creevey, I'm in Gryffindor, I wanted to be in Ravenclaw, to be in the same house of the great Girl-Who-Lived, but I was wondering if I could have an autographed picture."

Lisa and Padma exchanged an amused glance, it was obvious why young Colin was sorted into Gryffindor. Anyone who was not foolishly brave would have ran at the icy death glare that Elizabeth was giving him right now.

“An autographed picture, you say?” asked Elizabeth icily as Lisa and Padma braced themselves for Hurricane Potter.

“You know, so I can prove that I’ve met you, I’ve got a camera, and a boy in my dormitory said if I use a special potion, I can develop the picture so the people in it can move,” said Colin as he beamed excitedly before he held up a camera. “Maybe one of your friends could take the picture and I could stand by you.”

“Look, Liz doesn’t give out any autographed pictures, although I’m sure if you go down to Lockhart’s office, I’m sure he’ll be happy to help you,” said Padma trying to cut off a potentially dangerous situation of Elizabeth sticking that camera in a potentially uncomfortable place.

“What’s this about autographed pictures then?” asked a voice and Gilderoy Lockhart’s teeth, followed by Lockhart himself, walked up to the three girls and Colin. “Ah, Elizabeth Potter, already giving out signed pictures, the mark of a potentially successful career as a celebrity. A bit advantaged maybe, but even at the age of twelve you have a devoted fan.”

“I think obsessed fan would be more like it,” answered Elizabeth though gritted teeth, as she imagined a cutting curse meeting up with a part of Lockhart’s body, although which part she could care less.

“Camera shyness, eh?” asked Lockhart with a smile. “Don’t worry, we’ve all been through that phase before. I can give you some tips on how to make the camera capture you in the best light.”

“Great,” said Elizabeth sarcastically but Lockhart obviously dismissed this as a genuine acceptance for help.

“Excellent and don’t worry, I think a signed photograph with both of us will be worth as twice as much as a single photo and will relieve some of that camera shyness you have,” said Lockhart but a figure walked up the hallway. Elizabeth smiled when she realized it was Harry, he would find a way out of this.



As he walked out, Harry saw the scene as it folded out, Lockhart standing too close to an uncomfortable Elizabeth, and a first year student who had been staring at her during breakfast, about to snap a picture. He put on a pair of fake eyeglasses that had been given to him by Fred and George Weasley as a gag gift for his birthday. Quickly, Harry walked over as the first year student focused the camera but Harry took the camera from his hand before the first year could take a picture. The force he removed it caused the first year to nearly take a face plant on the corridor floor.

“Hey!” shouted Colin as he wheeled around to face Harry. Harry just snorted, as if this little pint sized obsessed fan could even hurt him. “That’s my camera.”

“What’s the meaning of this?” asked Lockhart. “Miss Potter and I were about to take a photo-op...”

“I am Miss Potter’s press agent and I’m afraid I’ll have to stop you from doing that,” answered Harry briskly as Lisa and Padma both were barely able to keep a straight face. “She contacted me immediately, to tell me that you tried to force her into a photo opportunity.”

“It was nothing but a bit of harmless fun,” offered Lockhart but Harry was not buying this for a second. Plus, Lockhart was so gullible he could not have figured out that Harry would have not gotten there that quickly, even with magic.

“If I ever find that you’ve been harassing Elizabeth Potter again, outside of what is allegedly you teaching a class, I will have you brought up on charges,” said Harry. “Not only that but I will have the rights to all of your literature and every Galleon you’ve ever made as a fiction author.”

“But all of my works are completely based on fact,” protested Lockhart, which caused Padma, Lisa, and Elizabeth to snicker at that thought. It was obvious to anyone not deluded by Lockhart’s teeth

that he was nothing but a fraud. The contradictions in his tales were proof enough.

‘Sure you are,’ responded Harry in a patronizing voice. “Just a fair warning, if you ever pester my client again, your entire career will be ruined. Is that clear?”

“Yes it is, but if you ever wanted to represent someone who was truthfully famous, come find me,” said Lockhart and Harry felt like he could gag before he turned to the three girls and Colin. “Now it’s best you get to class right now, you too Mr. Creevey, come on now, run along.”

Lockhart moved off as Colin followed.

“Thanks Harry,” responded Elizabeth. “It was really lucky that you were just passing by really...”

“Yes it was,” agreed Harry, who was really keeping a bit of a close eye on Elizabeth. Those articles that Skeeter wrote had inspired a great deal of venom directed towards her and Harry wanted to make sure his twin did not have too much of a time. “If you need to talk to me about anything, make sure you come find me.”

“I will Harry,” responded Elizabeth as she followed her friends to class, glad that Harry would be there for her when she needed his help but at the same time, she wanted to handle things on her own. Harry was great, but at the same time, he should not have to waste his time trying to help her with every little problem she had.

That reminded her that she needed to correspond with that diary, to get a bit more knowledge, to defend herself so she could handle herself in a tough situation without running to Harry for every little thing.

-

“I don’t really want to get Lizzie’s hopes up again anything, but I think based on the evidence, the Wizengamot might just barely vote

to get her away from the Dursleys and Mum will be able to get custody, no matter what Dumbledore says,” said Harry to Ginny as he had met Ginny as she had come back from Transfiguration on one day.

“So, the hearing is going to finally happen,” said Ginny.

“In March, that’s what Mum said, that’s about as far as the Wizengamot can push it back, but they’ve run out excuses,” responded Harry with a sigh, as he hoped that Elizabeth would gain her freedom from ever going back to the Dursleys. Dumbledore had been neutralized slightly, at least he hoped. “I just hope...the evidence is there, but I just know there will be some people who will try to justify what would happen for their own agendas. They see her as a threat.”

“Indeed they do,” replied a voice that made Ginny and Harry jump and they saw Draco standing right there.

“Draco, don’t do that!” exclaimed Ginny. “Do you think it’s funny to sneak up on people and scare them?”

“Actually it is,” said Draco. “I overheard Father on the Floo before, he said that someone needs to be kept as just barely more talented than a squib and given what we’ve learned about Elizabeth, it should be obvious who he was talking about.”

“So you think your father’s involved in Elizabeth remaining at the Dursleys?” asked Harry.

“Not directly, but we do have a few suspicious pieces of legislation that he spearheaded that were used as evidence to keep her at the Dursleys, especially when evidence might have started leaking into the Ministry, the rumors that she was not having a pleasant childhood,” said Draco. “Obviously Dumbledore had his share of the blame, but let’s face it, he’s the only one and his reasons are technically benevolent, even if only by his own twisted sense of logic.”

“And others aren’t even deluded enough to think they are helping keep Elizabeth safe,” added Ginny and Draco nodded, before they could see Elizabeth walk up the hallway in the distance, along with Lisa, Padma, and Luna following close behind. Ginny, Draco, and Harry broke up their talks, before they went to join them in the library to work on their homework.

-

Elizabeth returned to her dormitory in a foul mood. It was bad enough that Defense Against the Dark Arts class had been degraded by that inept fool for the past two months. Now, she had reason to believe that Luna’s dorm mates had been stealing her stuff. They had also regarded Luna with distaste, because she thought differently than other people. Quite frankly, Elizabeth found the girl engaging, if a bit quirky. Besides, a good part of her own house, not everyone, but a fair few, had treated her with loathing after those articles that foul Skeeter woman had put out about her. It had died down as the articles died down and mostly because one day, Elizabeth had been pushed too far, hexing another student for saying that she deserved to be locked up in a cupboard for the lies she helped spread. The detention had been worked out and most of everyone, outside of her friends, had steered clear of Elizabeth.

Then just earlier today, to top it all off, she had an encounter with Filch, the foul tempered caretaker of Hogwarts. She was accused of messing up the corridor, by tracking just a little mud inside after she went out to take a walk to clear her head. Filch had screamed at her and had put her in detention. For just a little bit of mud, nothing that a scouring charm could have not fixed really. Between this and what Luna’s dorm mates were doing to her, Elizabeth was in quite the mood as she sat down to write in the diary. Tom had taught her a few more useful charms, but Elizabeth felt he had been holding out. That inspired her to write in the diary more and more, to try to trick Tom into giving up some information.

Today was the usual mess.

That bad, eh. What happened now, Elizabeth?

That bloody caretaker jumped my arse for tracking just a little mud into the school. You would have thought I had flung dung all over the Great Hall by the way he was acting.

Seems like the man has a bit of a temper.

No, kidding, Tom. In fact, it's nothing compared to what my friend Luna is going through. Her roommates are stealing her stuff, I'm sure of it. All because she thinks a little differently, they make fun of her, calling her Looney Lovegood.

Once again the Wizarding World shows a disturbing lack of tolerance to new ideas.

Right, Tom, Harry said the same thing the other day. Luna doesn't seem bothered by it, but I think she's the kind of person who won't say a bad word about anyone. At least not directly that is, she implied she's not too big of a fan of Lockhart and his work.

Given how useless than man is, I doubt there is any sane person who would be.

Well, no one really does like him, except his legions of vapid fan girls. The teachers can't stand him and Harry attributes his popularity to mass hallucination and delusions. Why Dumbledore thought he would be a good teacher I haven't got the slightest idea.

Well Dumbledore isn't exactly your textbook definition of sane.

True, Tom, I've got to get to sleep right now, I've got Filch for detention at Five in the morning tomorrow. Scrubbing floors, even before the rest of the castle is up. What a nightmare.

He really has it out for you.

You're not kidding, it would serve him right if something bad happens to him, the miserable old man.

Beyond those thoughts, Elizabeth would not remember anything from now until she had woken up the next morning.

-

Argus Filch walked down the hallway, for his nightly patrol. He stopped as he saw a flood of water coming from the area of Moaning Myrtle's bathroom. He stepped forward and made a grisly discovery.

Hanging from the torches on the wall was his beloved cat Mrs. Norris and on the wall the following message appeared, that appeared to be hastily scrawled but still legible.

The Chamber of Secrets Has Been Opened: Enemies of the Heir Beware

"MY CAT!" shrieked Filch in a voice that was certain to wake up half of the castle.

-

Riddle had returned to his diary, as his hold had broken over the girl, just as he had Elizabeth Potter place the diary and her Invisibility Cloak back into the trunk. The girl had been a bit stronger than he had assumed, she had nearly fought off his control instinctively on a couple of occasions. She very nearly had woken up just before he could leave his calling card on the wall and it was a miracle that he had managed to direct her back to the dormitory before she could suspect anything that happened.

It would be a long time before Riddle could strengthen his hold on her and try another attack, but he had left his mark with the squib's cat. Elizabeth Potter would still be the perfect vessel to return to the real world, once he had firmly established his control. There was something in her that had blocked him from completely using her to carry out his work fully, but Riddle was patient and knew he would work around it. He had laid dormant in this diary for fifty years, a few more months should not have made a difference.

-

Elizabeth woke up, she had slept though the entire night, but she felt a bit sore and ached, not to mention she felt tired. She looked at the clock, it was almost seven. She winced, she had missed the detention with Filch, but quite frankly, it was unfairly given so she did not feel too bad.

“Liz, Liz!” shouted the voice of Lisa up the stairs, with Padma closely behind and Luna also in the shadows. “There you are, I thought you had already went down for detention.”

“I must have overslept,” replied Elizabeth, as she shook her head, as she realized she had never overslept. Something very wrong was going on here. Perhaps she was just paranoid, but something told her something was up.

“The entire school is talking, well, I can’t believe it, but the message is right there,” said Padma.

“What message?” asked Elizabeth curiously.

“Mrs. Norris was found petrified last night, with a message that stated the Chamber of Secrets has been opened again,” replied Luna and with that Elizabeth’s eyes widened at the news. She had remembered reading it and if it had opened again, it was bad news.

Still, Elizabeth could not shake the feeling she knew something more about the Chamber of Secrets that she could not recall off hand.

And that’s chapter eleven. Don’t know when the next update’s going to be, when I feel like writing more of this story maybe. Most of my free time is focused working on the sequel to the Heart of the Warrior Series, the Heir of the Warrior Trilogy(coming in 2009!). Still, there will be another update by the end of this month, I expect or early December at the latest. At least, that’s the plan right now.

## Chapter Twelve: The Evil Within the Pages:

The attack on Mrs. Norris was devastating and caused most of the school to be in a panic. However, it was brushed underneath the rug within a few days and after a while people went on their lives, brushing it off as an isolated incident. Over the next few weeks, people went beyond their business, except for Filch who was in hysterics and more horrible to students than ever. Other than that, most of everyone went on with their lives and the incident was only something that was scarcely talked about, except by the more paranoid students who thought there might be something up like Harry Black.

However, while a cat was only a slight cause for concern, a second attack, with similar symptoms to the first one had cropped up a few weeks into November. It was first year Gryffindor Muggleborn Colin Creevey, who had been getting a reputation throughout the school as a potential stalker for the Girl-Who-Lived. Up until yesterday, he had followed her around but no longer. He had been found, petrified much like Mrs. Norris had just weeks ago.

As for his camera, well that was quite the grisly sight. The film had been destroyed, burned as if some kind of acid had destroyed it. Any evidence of an attacker was lost and the security of the Hogwarts students had been lost as well, as they were looking around any corner.

Fearful that what happened to Colin Creevey might happen to them. The cat was one thing, but the fact a student had been attacked was an entire matter entirely. It was much easier to harm an animal than it was to harm a living breathing human being.

And that was only after the news that Creevey had been petrified had spread through the school. The public outrage from the press, the Ministry, and the parents of the Hogwarts students would spread soon enough and who knew what would happen from there.



Harry had heard about what happened with Creevey and quite frankly the fact that the little nuisance had been petrified was of little concern to Harry. The fact he was pestering Lizzie after every waking moment, had caused Harry to wish for some kind of harm on Creevey. Besides, it was not like whatever happened had killed the little creep, in fact he was going to make a full recovery. He was going to live to stalk another day. That was not the issue, but something had come back up, that Harry had brushed off after Mrs. Norris had been attacked, as he had much like everyone else had dismissed it as an isolated incident in the end, even if he was among the last, along with Ginny, to let to go. Still, he felt vindicated they were right and thus a new problem was brought forth.

Rather a more pressing matter had caused Harry some grave concern and he addressed it when he was hanging out with Luna, Ginny, and Draco the next day on the ground.

“Creevey was petrified, by someone,” said Harry thoughtfully.

“Or something,” interjected Luna helpfully and Harry nodded. “I imagine there may be some dark creatures who might have had a hand in petrifying young Colin.”

“Maybe,” said Harry as he turned towards Draco, who was looking in the distance, deep in thought. “What could petrify someone? Spells, potions, creatures, all sorts of things. What could have done that to Creevey?”

“Why are you looking at me?” inquired Draco as both of the girls struggled not to giggle.

“Because Draco, your father has some questionable tastes in books and it stands to reason that you might have accidentally snuck a look at some of them,” said Ginny as she struggled to keep a straight face.

“Touché, Weasley,” remarked Draco in an irritated voice. “And for information, I do read and yes, someone being petrified can happen in a number of ways. Potions and spells, very dark, nothing that any

of the students at Hogwarts could pull off. Even I can't and you know how skilled I am."

"Yes we do, after you blasted yourself in the wall that one time you tried a summoning charm," said Harry and Draco looked at him with mock outrage. "Still, you do have a point; no student at Hogwarts could pull off the dark magic to petrify anyone or anything. Which is even more baffling..."

"It is," said Ginny as she looked at Harry, she could tell he was frustrated that he could not figure this out. Harry hated not knowing anything. "It couldn't be one of the teachers could it?"

"I doubt it very much, they are a bunch of Dumbledore lovers who couldn't even pull off the most rudimentary of magic that's considered dangerous, much less complex dark magic," said Draco.

"Unless it's Snape," remarked Ginny. "He was rumored to dabble in dark magic a time or two in his day."

"It's not Snape," said Luna confidently without blinking or even missing a beat.

"How do you know?" asked Ginny curiously, as Luna just had one of her looks as if she was certain she was right and no one would sway her.

"No motive, as it just doesn't make sense for him to attack Colin," said Luna. "He wouldn't do anything to risk messing up his position with Dumbledore either."

"True Luna," said Ginny grudgingly, before she turned to the others, brushing her flaming red hair away from her eyes, as she was deep in thought as she reached an unfortunate conclusion. "Which leads us back to square one..."

“Knowing less than nothing?” offered Harry and the other three nodded. “It could be a dark creature, do any of you know anything that can petrify someone?”

Luna and Ginny shook their heads and Draco looked thoughtful for a moment, racking his brain but after a moment, he shook his head as well. Harry could have sworn he read about something somewhere that had the ability to petrify someone by looking them indirectly in the eye. It was ages ago and Harry had only read about it in passing. He could not even remember what book it might have been. It was going to bug him until he figured it out, but he had a feeling that if he remembered this vital piece of information

-

The entire school was buzzing after what happened to Colin Creevey. The most insane tales were flying around the school, as the theories appeared to get more and more absurd by each passing hour. Even Ravenclaw was not immune, as many of the members of the normally logical house had begun to lose their heads and take a journey into the absurd.

Still, no matter how it had happened, the facts were there, Colin Creevey was found late last night, petrified. Reports varied slightly, but the most accepted answer was that Dumbledore had found him and brought the first year Gryffindor to the hospital wing. He had been petrified much like that cat had been just weeks ago. Mandrakes were being prepared, as a project by the second year students, but it would be quite some time before they would be ready for harvest. The end of the year appeared to be the time table and at that time, the Restorative Draught would be concocted to bring Mrs. Norris and Colin out of their states.

“It’s weird, I can’t think of anything that could be doing this,” said Lisa with a frown, as she said with Elizabeth and Padma in the back of the library, in quiet voices. “With the cat, I was willing to let it go as just being a prank gone wrong, but now two for two...”

“Some advanced dark magic, I would imagine, it would have to be,” muttered Padma as she strained to think of anything. “Obviously I have no idea on the specifics but if he could leave Creevey petrified and even Dumbledore can’t undo it...”

“Are we sure Dumbledore can’t undo it? Because there are a lot of things he should and can undo that he chooses not to,” asked Elizabeth in a bit of a challenging voice, as she clutched her bag, with the diary on the top. She had heard about the Creevey incident and had a feeling of subconscious dread that she could not really pinpoint. The fact was that Mrs. Norris suffered her fate after Elizabeth had a run in with Filch and Creevey was now petrified after he was taking being annoying to a whole new level. Then he was petrified. Perhaps she was being paranoid, but something strange was going on, people that she was having run ins with had been dropping petrified. Elizabeth did not believe in coincidences and wondered if the person behind the attacks were trying to frame her. Her mind reasoned that Dumbledore might be behind this somehow, trying send her back to the Dursleys. Once again, Elizabeth envisioned Dumbledore’s bloody demise and it was a beautiful sight to behold. Too bad there was little chance of it ever becoming a reality.

“Well no,” admitted Lisa as she looked at her friend, with a raised eyebrow. “It’s just what everyone is saying...”

“I would have thought you two would have not believed what everyone was saying after what Dumbledore put me through,” said Elizabeth in a bit of a testy voice as she looked at her friends, who recoiled slightly at the intense look in their friend’s eyes. “He’s nothing but a two timing old bastard who would put a few lives in peril for his own benefit...”

“We know Elizabeth, but I don’t think you should really take that tone with us, we don’t know really what happened, we just are saying what everyone else is talking about,” said Padma as she looked at Elizabeth. “You’ve had a short temper lately...”

“I know, I don’t know what’s going on, all the press, it’s really starting to get to me,” responded Elizabeth, but even this feeble

explanation sounded beyond absurd in her mind. To be honest, she thought the press had something to do with it. Skeeter had written another article that had implied that it was Elizabeth's fault for what happened at the Dursleys and also made a remark along the lines of the Wizarding World needing to choose their heroes better. She never met Skeeter in her life, but she seemed like a parasite who was only worried about enhancing her own reputation and making a bit of extra gold.

Still she could not shake the feeling that there was something else going on. Elizabeth made a mental note to talk to Harry, but for some reason, she felt it was not too pressing of a matter to waste Harry's time.

"Actually, it's alright Elizabeth, you must be under a ton of stress," offered Lisa. "The hearing should be coming up and hopefully the Dursleys will be nothing but a bad memory. Even the Wizengamot can't ignore the facts."

"I hope you're right Lisa, I really do," said Elizabeth, who decided to talk to Tom, instead of Harry. There was no need to bother Harry, he had his own friends and she had intruded herself on his life once too often. Tom had nothing better to do and besides he was a help, teaching her all kinds of advanced magic that Hogwarts would never teach. Besides, since he was only a diary, Elizabeth felt no hesitation in ranting to him.

-

Severus Snape wanted to strangle Gilderoy Lockhart. The pompous blow head was talking about how if the person who was behind this had ever faced him, the attacks would stopped.

"If anyone who is dangerous enough to petrify someone ever came in contact with you, Lockhart, you would be running in the other direction as fast as you could, providing they did not kill you first," muttered Snape as he moved around where Dumbledore stood.

“You seem troubled Severus,” remarked Dumbledore and Snape looked at Dumbledore. The old man might be brilliant but he had the tendency to state the obvious at times.

“These attacks, has the Chamber of Secrets really been reopened or is this an elaborate hoax?” asked Snape and Dumbledore looked at Snape calmly.

“I believe we should consider the possibility that it has been opened and it is a very grave one at that, the attacks last time it was opened were rather horrifying and in one case, lethal,” responded Dumbledore, who was at a loss to see how Tom was doing it after all of these years. The last time he checked, he was in Albania and there was only a tiny fraction of him left, barely enough to even move without possessing something.

“Do you have any ideas on who may be behind it?” asked Snape.

“Naturally I have my ideas Severus, but without proof to back them up, they tend to be as worthless as any person’s ideas,” said Dumbledore as he looked at Snape with a sigh. “The upcoming custody trial for Elizabeth Potter, it sounds like the Wizengamot has scheduled it for February. She needs to be returned to the Dursleys but I fear retaliation from certain parties if I interfere too much in these matters.”

“Headmaster, Andromeda Black won’t give up on this, after the state she saw the girl in, and quite frankly I’m at a loss knowing what good this will do because you have a potential nightmare on your hands when one of two things happen,” said Snape. “You will have a public relations nightmare when Potter gets killed or she kills the Dursleys. Take your pick which one you will think is likely to happen, but either of them would not be good to your reputation. Skeeter might be taking down Potter’s reputation right now but she will attack yours as well giving the proper motives.”

“Yes, Rita Skeeter does have that unfortunate tendency to write the worst about people, but there is far more at stake than a girl’s happiness, besides she is perfectly safe,” responded Dumbledore

calmly, with a twinkle in his eyes. "Adversity breeds greatness in some people."

"It also breeds dark wizards and witches in many cases, Headmaster," said Snape as he looked at Dumbledore. "What makes you so sure she's not beginning to resent all Muggles?"

"She'll be safe, the Wizengamot has to see that, I have presented the specifications of the protections around the house to Amelia," said Dumbledore. "I have a feeling a logic minded woman like her not to mention the rest of the court could see the necessity of Elizabeth being sent back to the Dursleys even over other circumstantial evidence that she was being mistreated by her family."

"Have it your way Headmaster, but when this blows up in your face, don't say you weren't told this will happen," commented Snape lightly.

-

"February?" asked Ginny a couple of days later as she was talking to Harry privately in a corridor. "They managed to push it back that long."

"I'm afraid so, that's the soonest we could hope for, but at least this will be tied up by the end of the school year and Elizabeth won't have to spend another minute with those monsters," responded Harry as he sighed. "Mum's been collecting evidence, the pictures I took will help, but she also found records of several reports of abuse that had never been followed up. There was some digging there, but she found it nevertheless. Elizabeth has a pretty good chance of not going back there, I hope."

"If the evidence is so good, shouldn't it be cut and dry?" asked Ginny.

"You're right, it should be but it isn't, the Wizengamot has people with their own agendas, some will look at everything objectively, but most will look at how this will benefit them," said Harry. "Still, many could think that protecting the Girl-Who-Lived from an abusive

household and being the people who voted to revoke the Dursleys guardianship rights would be something that might benefit their own agenda. Still with any luck, Elizabeth will join us and be away from them forever, although I can't shake the fact that Dumbledore still might have something up his sleeve."

"I hope not, but everything will work out, it has to," said Ginny in a firm voice, as she looked Harry in his eyes. "Of course, if this happens, there will be something that you need to tell Elizabeth, that you should have told her the first time you met her, you know...the twin thing."

"I know Ginny, believe me, I should have, I'm have to, and I'm going to when the time is right," responded Harry in a resigned voice as he looked at his friend. "The thing is, I've had half of my life to think about it and...it's something that I'm not sure how I'm going to do it even after all of this time."

"Perhaps you can go with something along the lines, 'Elizabeth can I talk to you? How are you doing? Good, oh and by the way, we were twins that were separated at birth because of some hair brained scheme of Dumbledore's, which was none of my fault so please don't hex me. By the way, what's for lunch'", responded Ginny and Harry gave her a look with narrowed eyes. "I know, but that's the best I can come up with. When the time is right, you will come up with a way to explain this to her with a minimum of bloodshed, but it might be better if it's done soon of the year."

"By the end of the year, I'll think of something by then," said Harry as he looked at Ginny who nodded, it was obvious she was going to make sure Elizabeth knew one way or another.

"It would be better for both of you and we don't have to sneak around, keeping this secret from our friends," said Ginny. "Do you plan on telling the press about this if Dumbledore tries something later on?"

"I really don't want it to come to that, because I'll have all those, Harry Potter is actually the Boy-Who-Lived nutcases coming out of



the woodwork, not that there are not a fair deal of those folks around now, thinking I'll in some shack, being raised to be some ultimate warrior of magical power, with Elizabeth being used as a decoy, but thankfully those rumors have died down in recent years," said Harry, as he looked at Ginny. "I'm still worried about what's Petrifying these students.."

"We all are to an extent, especially since no one has found anything linking to who might behind the attacks," said Ginny and Harry could see worry etched in her eyes.

"Anyone could be behind this, your brother is sprouting off some insane theory that Draco is behind it, just because he's Slytherin," remarked Harry with a bit of irritation in his voice and Ginny did not need to ask Harry to clarify which brother he was talking about. "Granger is agreeing with him and you know how rare that is. At least Longbottom has some brains, along with a bit of common sense, and is trying to convince them that they might be making a mistake but too bad he doesn't have too much of a spine to force your brother to listen to reason, logic, or just listen period."

"True," said Ginny as the door opened. They quickly acted natural but it was just Luna, who walked in.

"There you two are, I've been looking all over for you," remarked Luna as she looked at her two friends. "I thought you two might be interested but there is a dueling club down in the Great Hall, the first meeting starts in ten minutes."

"Really, that's interesting," commented Harry as Ginny nodded by his side, as they followed Luna.

"Draco is already down there with his approved friends, but he told me to come and get you two, because I doubt you would want to miss this," commented Luna lightly, as she lead Harry and Ginny towards the Great Hall.

"I wonder who is teaching the class," said Harry, the two girls as they walked forward.

“Well they said it could be someone with a dueling background, Professor Flitwick was said to be a dueling champion when he was younger so it could be him,” remarked Luna. “Snape might be another possibility, or maybe even Dumbledore himself.”

“Yeah that could be but knowing our luck, it will probably be Lockhart,” remarked Ginny in a joking manner as they approached the podium but she stopped, as Harry looked at her. Sure enough one Gilderoy Lockhart was approaching the stage with a bright smile. She looked around towards Harry and Luna, who both struggled not to laugh at the look of utter revulsion on her face. “I hate it when I’m right.”

“In this case, I agree, why did you have to be right, Ginny?” asked Harry as he felt sick at the very sight of Lockhart as he waved, with that vomit inducing smile. Several girls swooned, which made Harry very glad that they kept who was teaching the Dueling Club a secret. If there were masses of fan girls there, he did not know if he could take it.

“Everyone welcome to the dueling club,” said Lockhart in a boisterous voice. He looked around, he appeared to have one setting, egotistical and self serving whether it was an autograph signing, “teaching” Defense Against the Dark Arts, or leading a dueling club. As he stepped back to look around, they spotted Snape sitting there, who appeared to want to distance himself from this as much as possible. “I will be teaching this club and Professor Snape will be my assistant. I understand he knows a bit about dueling himself.”

“Just a bit?” whispered Ginny. “Are we talking about the same Severus Snape?”

“Hopefully they give a realistic demonstration,” remarked Harry which caused Luna and Ginny to snicker, Draco appeared to be disgusted on the other end, as Pansy, along with several others, swooned at the very presence of Lockhart.

“I’m ashamed on belief of the female sex right about now,” said Ginny as she looked away in disgust.

“Especially since some people should be smart enough,” muttered Harry.

“Now we will deliver a short demonstration of what we might be teaching you, naturally none of us will be aiming to kill,” said Lockhart.

“Damn,” whispered Ginny sadly.

“Think if we slipped Snape ten Galleons, he might throw something that would snap Lockhart’s neck or at the very least remove his vocal cords,” remarked Harry.

“Maybe some kind of warts curse or have his hair fall out,” suggested Ginny but several girls looked scandalized but Luna looked on with interest, not saying much. She had read Lockhart’s books, admitting she had serious self harm issues because of that fact. She tended to have an open mind but they did seem too far fetched. Lockhart and Snape circled each other and Snape easily blocked Lockhart’s laughable attack before he knocked him to the ground. Harry heard some snickers, mostly coming from the two girls on either side of him. He looked up and Elizabeth looked positively amused as well and Draco did not bother to even hide his mirth, laughing, getting glares from Pansy the entire time. Crabbe and Goyle even chuckled and mostly everyone who did not have a crush on Lockhart because of his smile was positively amused.

“Need a hand up, Gilderoy,” said Snape in calm amusement.

“No thank on Severus, I’m fine,” responded Lockhart as he rose to his feet, wincing in agony before he decided the time for demonstration was finished, given the fact that Snape might be a little more rough during the next attack. “As Professor Snape just demonstrated, he used the disarming charm, the incantation Entrailarius...”

“Expelliarmus,” corrected Snape with narrowed eyes. He hated when people got spell incantations incorrect.

“Yes, that would be it,” responded Lockhart shaking his head. “I believe we could be paired up into groups to practice, remember disarming only, and then we can move forward with this dueling club.”

-

Elizabeth wondered if someone was out to get her. A couple of weeks ago, a vase nearly toppled onto her head and she put it off to being an accident, but being in a dueling club with that pompous fool as the instructor really annoyed her. To make matters worse, she was partnered up with Granger. There were times where she wondered if the gods were playing some demented game of can you top this with her life. Padma and Lisa were paired up nearby and she could see Draco and Harry paired up, with Luna and Ginny paired up as well.

“Elizabeth,” remarked Hermione calmly.

“Hermione,” said Elizabeth calmly. “I believe dueling etiquette mandates we bow right now but I’m sure you read that in a book.”

“Yes I have,” said Hermione calmly with a nod, getting a sense she was being mocked. “Ready.”

“Yes, I am,” said Elizabeth and they turned to each other. Before Hermione could even say the incantation, Elizabeth threw a disarming charm. Hermione was hoisted up and her wand fell to the side. The Girl-Who-Lived looked on with a nod as Hermione got up.

“You said that spell silently,” said Hermione in an accusing voice.

“Yeah, Harry taught me last year,” said Elizabeth and Hermione just looked utterly enraged. She had rarely seen Elizabeth in the library, yet the girl had passed her by in nearly every subject. In fact, Harry appeared to be the only person smarter than the Girl-Who-Lived in their year, with Draco up there, the only thing holding him back was his lack of interests in a few subjects he had deemed unworthy. “It’s

not hard, unless of course you've been practicing with the incantations for five years, then it's a pain in the arse to figure out."

"You're not supposed to learn that until we're in our sixth year," said Hermione, outraged that Elizabeth had what she perceived to be an unfair advantage.

"Well, we're also not to be left with uncaring relatives and be a pawn to sell newspapers either, but life really isn't fair after all, is it?" asked Elizabeth and Hermione had no retort, she just sat back.

"It's obvious you have the spell down, I'll just step out of your way, because it's obvious you don't need to study," stated Hermione in a jealous tone of voice.

"Well if you spent a little less time with your nose shoved in a book, you might have some friends," responded Elizabeth in a hushed voice, the comment had just came out but the pressures of everything that had happened recently. Hermione stalked off, to take her aggressions out on Ron Weasley, who looked utterly hopeless on the other side of the room.

Meanwhile, Pansy Parkinson looked at the Girl-Who-Lived with absolute disgust. Everyone thought she was perfect and heroic, but she was nothing really. She let herself get pushed around by her filthy, common, Muggle relatives, like a common piece of filth. Aiming her wand, Pansy had the perfect spell. She had found it when she had taken a look at one of her older brother's books.

"SERPENTSORTIA!" shouted Pansy suddenly, as a loud bang echoed, that knocked her off of her feet. A giant, but deformed snake appeared, as it turned around. Unfortunately for her, she had inefficient power to properly direct it. The snake made a beeline for a second year Hufflepuff student who paused, standing there like an idiot.

Elizabeth stopped, eyes widened in horror. There was still chaos going in the dueling club and thus it took several seconds for everyone to realize that the second year was about to get his throat

torn by the snake. This caused Elizabeth to take an impulsive action that she regretted approximately two seconds later.

“STAY AWAY!” shouted Elizabeth and she recoiled as the entire dueling club's eyes were on her. Hermione in particular was looking at her with some strange mixture of curiosity, fear, and jealousy. Most of everyone screamed in fear.

“She's a dark witch, she just spoke in Parseltongue!” shouted a third year Ravenclaw with widened eyes.

“Knew there had to be something off with her!” shrieked another student as Elizabeth just turned, and rushed off. She could sense Padma and Lisa looking at her, but she could not really bare to see what they were saying. Lockhart looked absolutely perplexed, as Snape casually caused the snake to vanish, without even batting an eye.

Harry took a step forward, but Ginny grabbed him by the sleeve of his robes.

“Wait a couple of minutes, if she's anything like you are, she might be a bit short tempered,” muttered Ginny in his ear, so only Harry could hear her.

“So Potter's a Parseltongue,” remarked Draco casually as they walked from the dueling club.

“There's not a problem with that, is there, Draco?” asked Harry.

“Do I look like a Gryffindor to you?” responded Draco.

“Well, no, I can just imagine what Ron's saying right now,” said Ginny in disgust. Ron had hero worshipped the ground the Girl-Who-Lived walked on but one incident like this would turn everything around.

“Some ill informed tripe I presume,” remarked Luna as she looked at Padma and Lisa who walked out, looking very concerned.

“Did you see where Elizabeth went?” asked Lisa.

“She looked upset, I think she thinks that everyone will hate her now,” said Padma.

“Most of everyone will hate her now, I knew this was going to happen,” said Harry in an off handed voice.

“You knew?” asked Draco and Harry nodded.

“ Naturally and I told her not to let anyone know, when she mentioned she had talked to snakes on a couple of occasions, but I guess she was caught up in the heat of the moment,” said Harry. “I think she should be left alone for a little bit.”

“But she might get the wrong impression and think we hate her,” argued Lisa.

“Yeah, if we don’t talk to her right away, it might make things worse,” said Padma and Harry took a breath, but Ginny responded for him.

“Given all of what’s happened lately, this could be the straw that breaks the Hippogriff’s back,” said Ginny. “Give her time, to cool down.”

“She has been snippy lately, true,” said Lisa. “It’s those articles Skeeter is writing...”

“Believe me, we know and if there is anything I can do, I will put a stop to it,” said Harry in a far off voice. Distantly, he could sense Elizabeth’s feelings of both sadness and anger at what had happened, along with a strong amount of frustration. The twin bond, which had been deadened when they were separated, was starting to grow slightly stronger. That both caused Harry relief and worry, as he knew sooner or later, he would have to tell the truth. It was difficult, mostly because he had no idea how well Elizabeth would take it right now.

He loved his sister, but she could have a violent temper when provoked. She was mostly fine, as long as Dumbledore or the Dursleys were not brought into a conversation.

-

Parseltongue, talking to snakes, Harry warned me about that, but I didn't listen and now...

Everyone hates you.

Yes, that is a way to put it, Tom, but I wouldn't say everyone. A lot of people don't like me to begin with because I defeated Voldemort. I still have my friends, at least I think I do...

Can you be certain of that?

Of course, Harry at least, he knew and he would never turn away from me. I trust him, he's never lied to me about anything.

Perhaps, Elizabeth, but I do find it odd that everyone is so willing to condemn you, yet they will expect you to rise up when something threatens them. Pitiful, if I may say so myself. Perhaps you should have let the snake kill that foolish boy.

Tom, I can't believe you would suggest such a thing, now, I wanted to ask you something, about my black outs, they have been occurring at the oddest times.

Stress, Elizabeth, you're overworking yourself and those articles are taking a toll. The winter holidays are coming up soon if I'm not mistaken. That will give you time to breath.

I guess, you're right Tom, I'll be seeing you, I need to lie down, I have a headache.

Do rest, I'll be speaking to you soon enough, I expect.



Without another word, the diary closed shut and Elizabeth's mind went blissfully blank.

-

Tom sighed, his hold on the girl was not as strong as he would have liked. He had to exert more force and it was taking much longer to get his hooks into her so to speak than he would have liked. He was intrigued by the power, but she had to be something. She defeated his future self after all. He mentally plotted to give some hints that her friends might be shunning her, while also planting subconscious suggestions to keep her distance from them.

Right now, the time seemed ripe for another attack to make Hogwarts aware of the presence of the heir of Salazar Slytherin.

-

Harry walked down the hallway, deep in thought, at everything that had just occurred in the Dueling Club not even a few hours ago. Technically he was not supposed to be out, as it was after curfew but that never stopped him before. He thought about writing to his mother, asking her for some advice but he stopped when he saw a very peculiar sight.

His sister standing there in the hallway, muttering something under her breath, he could see a shadow moving but he could not get a glimpse of it. She said something in Parseltongue that Harry could not understand as he moved forward and his eyes widened, as he saw a small dark haired first year Hufflepuff on the ground; face looking like it was carved out of stone.

Harry approached Elizabeth cautiously; she was there, with a vapid expression in her eyes. The light was on and no one was home. At the sound of footsteps, Harry made an executive decision to grab her by the arm and pull her behind a tapestry, before anyone could see her at the scene of the crime. There had to be a reasonable explanation about this and Harry was determined to get to the bottom of this.

-

Tom cursed himself, wishing he had not dismissed the Basilisk right away. His hold on the girl was beginning to weaken but he saw Harry Black. He was the one obstacle for total control of the vessel. Black being petrified or worse would cause the girl to pour even more time and emotion into the diary; it was obvious they were rather close friends.

He felt the vessel being pulled up towards the Astronomy tower and the girl slowly coming to her senses. He tried to regain enough control to stun Black but it was not happening as the vessel's eyes were beginning to flicker open.

-

"Harry?" asked Elizabeth in a dazed voice. "What just happened?"

"You were found...you were found over a first year Hufflepuff girl that had been petrified," said Harry quickly and Elizabeth looked horrified. "Look Lizzie, I'm not accusing you of anything but..."

"I believe you Harry," said Elizabeth, as she tried to tell Harry about the black outs she was suffering but her vocal cords were not working. It was almost like some separate entity was controlling her ability to speak.

"Now, Elizabeth, while I know you're not behind this, I do need to know if you might have had any access to any enchanted or cursed objects that might have caused you to do this," said Harry and Elizabeth nearly nodded, before she shook her head. She had no idea what was causing to do this.

"Tom," whispered Elizabeth in a strained voice, causing her throat to be raw red from strain of getting that one word out.

"He's trying to separate us Elizabeth, he's jealous of the friendship we have, he just wants to use you like the rest of them, you have to attack him," muttered a voice in her ear.

“Pardon?” asked Harry in confusion.

“Last thing I remembered...writing in...my...diary...diary,” said Elizabeth as she slumped against the wall. “It’s...”

“Now, Lizzie, there’s really no need for that,” said a voice in her ear, it was persuasive and charming. “Sure a few blackouts, but you’re more powerful and stronger than ever. Together, we took care of Creevey, we sent Filch a message by taking out his cat. The Hufflepuffs would have said things behind your back and walked all over you, but they knew to fear us now.”

“Don’t want to...” said Elizabeth as she slowly held the diary out with trembling hands. Harry stepped forward and suddenly, he felt a strong urge to write in the diary. This urge nearly overpowered it. “It’s making me...”

“No, Elizabeth, do you want to go back to the Dursleys?” asked the voice. “With my help, you can stop anyone who hurts you, one by one, even Dumbledore wouldn’t be a match for you when I’m through with you. Harry will understand, use the coma spell on him to remove him as a witness, it’s harmless, he’ll be out for six months.”

“You want me to attack Harry, I can never...first friend I ever had,” said Elizabeth.

“Is he really a friend?” asked the voice. “He left you to linger at the Dursleys, to suffer, he let Dumbledore dictate what he did, he doesn’t give a damn, only to make himself look better, because you’re the Girl-Who-Lived.”

Harry looked at the diary to the flicker expression in his twin’s eyes and he knew immediately what must be done.

“Elizabeth, drop the diary, it has a hold on you,” said Harry. “It’s making you attack these people, you have to fight it, you’re stronger than it ever will be.”

“Must fight, can’t let it take advantage of me,” muttered Elizabeth.

“What are you doing?” asked the voice in a slightly hurt tone. “Do you realize what kind of power you’re throwing away? I can teach you more than seven years of education at Hogwarts can. Otherwise, you’ll always be nothing but a weak little girl.”

“I’m not weak!” thought Elizabeth forcefully. “I don’t need you to be powerful, I don’t need you to be good at magic, I don’t need you at all. You’ve used me to attack people, taken advantage of me...”

“No one denies me, you won’t leave here...” stated Tom in a wicked voice. “You are mine to do with as I please. You can’t just get rid of me just like that.”

Harry snapped his fingers and Elizabeth jerked up. She looked at the diary in her hands, it looked so harmless, so unexpected, but there was nothing more wicked. She looked towards the Astronomy Tower window and the glass window pane vanished, allowing her to throw the diary right out of the Astronomy Tower window.

She collapsed backwards, where Harry caught her before she could smack her hand onto the desk. It felt like something was torn away from her very essence and she felt extremely weak as a result. Still, she knew that she had somehow got rid of Tom before he completely influenced her.

“Are you alright Lizzie?” asked Harry in a concerned voice, as she nodded.

“Fine, but I think I might need the Hospital Wing,” said Elizabeth with a strained smile.

“Right away,” said Harry as he lead her gently down the stairs, it was a good thing that Madam Pomfrey never asked too many questions. His sister had thrown off what appeared to be a very powerful magical artifact. He planned to go and fetch it immediately in the morning. That was not the type of thing that one left lying around.

-

A pair of gloved hands picked up the book that was lying on the snow early in the morning and walked back into the school with it just moments before Harry had gone out to retrieve it.

Wow, first update in almost two and a half months. To be fair, I've been working on my other story a lot more recently.

Hopefully the next update comes out a bit sooner, at least that's the intention.

## Chapter Thirteen: Times of Intrigue.

Harry moved outside, early in the morning, sneaking away while everyone was at Breakfast and thus he would not be missed. He shivered, the cold was bitter and he moved forward, around the Hogwarts grounds, careful not to be seen. He stepped outside, to the area where the Astronomy Tower was and he looked down, before he saw the ground. There were leaves and twigs around but no diary.

“Where the bloody hell is it?” asked Harry, who had a first thought that there was no way it could have grown legs and walked off but considering the fact it was an enchanted book, it might have. He looked around, any number of possibilities moving through his head. Perhaps the wind might have picked it up during the night and blew it elsewhere. He looked around carefully, it might have gone into the Forbidden Forest, at least he hoped it would, because it was likely that no one would find it that would be endangered. Still, he was not about to venture in the Forest, it might have been lost forever and it was too dangerous for a twelve year old wizard, no matter how good, to enter the Forest. Anyone who sanctioned that for something like a detention would have to be a blithering idiot.

Still after a couple more moments of searching, Harry had to come to the unfortunate conclusion that the diary was gone. Perhaps a teacher had gotten a hold of it but if a student had gotten their hands on the diary, the nightmare was not over. As a matter of fact, it was just about ready to begin.

-

“First of all, you three, none of this is to leave this room,” said Harry, as he ushered Ginny, Draco, and Luna into an empty classroom in between classes.

“So we’re going to learn the truth about why Elizabeth is in the hospital wing?” asked Luna.

“Yes, because I didn’t believe that spell backfiring story that was officially given,” said Draco. “Of course, there are rumors going

around that she was petrified, but people still think she was the heir. They think the magic backfired on her..."

"I'm going to lynch Parkinson for causing this entire mess to start by what she did," said Harry.

"You have my blessing," said Draco in an emotionless tone of voice.

"But she really wasn't petrified," said Ginny.

"Yes, but the fact that she was behind this, they are right, not for the reasons they think, because it's...complicated," said Harry in an uncertain voice and they all looked at him, anxious for him to continue, so he took a deep breath. "I don't know the specifics, because I haven't had a chance to talk to her, because of this diary that she was writing it, it was enchanted and it caused her to black out, I think, the person took control and caused her to carry out the attacks. It was lucky I caught up with her when she did, because she would have been caught and I don't know what would have happened."

"Dumbledore would have had the perfect leverage over her for the hearing, to make her go back to the Dursleys," said Luna.

"Grim, but I bet that's exactly what was going to happen," said Ginny angrily. "Not that he doesn't have enough leverage with the Parseltongue thing, but..."

"Don't worry, Ginny, Dumbledore has some skeletons that should...remain in the closet, shall we say, that he wouldn't want to come out," remarked Harry as he looked at them all. "I'm more worried about the fact that she managed to throw the diary out of the window of the Astronomy Tower and when I went to get it first thing in the morning, I couldn't find it on the grounds."

Ginny and Luna both looked rather disturbed about the possibility of someone finding such a dangerous magical object, but Draco looked a bit skeptical.

“Now, I’m sure the diary has to be somewhere, and there is always a chance that a teacher could have picked it up and disposed of it,” said Draco in a logical voice. “This might not be as bad as you think it is Harry.”

“I hope you’re right, because the moment I came close to the diary, I felt a strong desire to write into it myself, it was all I could do to fight that urge and I doubt many in this school would even recognize the signs, except for Dumbledore and maybe Snape, a couple other teachers, maybe,” said Harry quickly, thinking about what the potential consequences could be of what could happen. “I’m just worried about if someone gets the diary and gets it working, what that could mean to Lizzie. It could spill her secrets, but I’ll ask more about it when Pomfrey clears her from the hospital wing.”

“I wouldn’t really jump to conclusions unless there are more attacks,” said Draco.

“I agree with Draco, any number of things could have happened to the diary, but there is always a chance that it could be the very worst,” offered Luna and Harry just responded with a shrug.

“Elizabeth was acting very irrational and temperamental recently, could that be something we could look out for as clues?” asked Ginny.

“Perhaps,” said Harry grudgingly. “But I don’t know exactly how much that will help us.”

“No kidding, we are in a school of teenagers, where someone is always angsty about something,” responded Draco, as another interesting theory had went through his mind, that he would not admit to his friends. His father might be behind this, especially considering it would be easy to slip Elizabeth the diary and the way his father had been acting in the weeks leading up to Hogwarts. It had been odd, even for him. “Whatever happens, happens, we’re a group of eleven and twelve year old children, there isn’t much we can do about it.”

“We shouldn’t have to do anything about it, hopefully this entire mess is behind us and the school can move on,” said Harry, as



Christmas was coming up in a couple of weeks and he did not want to have a shadow cast over the holiday fun that was sure to happen. Still, hopes were one thing, what may actually happen in reality was an entirely different matter all together.

-

Elizabeth woke up, feeling aches and pains all over her body, much like she had gotten hit with a tank. Only, the tank might be less painful, as she struggled to remember what happened and then it hit her like a rush. That diary had been using her this entire time, causing her to attack several victims and petrify them. The actual events were still fuzzy, the memories were in a thick cloud of fog that she could not see through no matter how much she tried. With Harry's help, she threw off the influence of Tom, and launched the diary right out the window. She broke the diary's influence of her and it hurt like hell. She vaguely remembered Harry telling Madam Pomfrey that a spell that she had tried had backfired on her and landed her in this condition. That was before she drifted off into a nice slumber and did not wake up. She still felt the effects of the diary and more she thought about it, it was not making her stronger, it was leeching her strength and it took everything she had to throw off its influence.

"I see you're awake," said Madam Pomfrey in a stern voice. "I hope you've learned a valuable lesson about tampering with magic without the proper precaution, it was lucky that you didn't suffer any more lasting injuries. Lucky indeed, right now you've been sleeping pretty much for the past two days straight."

"Two days?" asked Elizabeth in a shocked voice, she had no idea at all that she had been out that long. Being a Ravenclaw, she began to worry about all the schoolwork she had to catch up on.

"Given the alternative, I believe being unconscious for two days is very lucky indeed, you are to stay the rest of the day and if I'm satisfied with your condition, you're clear to go," said Pomfrey. "Really, you don't need any more treatment right now; all you need is rest as

you're extremely weak, so I guess you can consider yourself lucky on that front."

"Right, lucky," muttered Elizabeth as Pomfrey moved to tend to her other patients and Elizabeth sank into the pillows, tired, weak, and irritated. She could not believe that she would be swayed by an enchanted book. It would annoy her and it was lucky that Harry showed up when he did to lead her away before she was discovered at the scene of the crime. After the Parseltongue diabolical, she heard enough mutterings the hours afterwards and she would be a fool to not think she would hear any more. With the hearing coming around the corner, she was afraid Dumbledore would use anything at his disposal to keep her at the Dursleys. He had never offered a real reason why she was there, other than she was safe. She hated to hear what Dumbledore would classify as her being in danger.

She drifted back to sleep, concerned about these matters but it would be something she would worry about in the morning. Harry invited her to stay over the holidays and she accepted, not wanting to be in Hogwarts any longer than she had to.

-

"Everything thinks the girl is the Heir of Slytherin," remarked Snape in a staff meeting that day and several teachers just responded with shrugs.

"I've noticed, the members of my house seems to think she is guilty," said Minerva with a sigh. "I don't believe it. She doesn't seem like the person who would attack students, even though she does have motive to do so."

"She isn't," piped up Flitwick. "Miss Potter might have a bit of a temper but she doesn't seem to be the one who would maliciously attack students. No, there has to be another explanation but I'm afraid that incident with the snake in the dueling club has caused the entire school to be a bit uneasy around her."

“I agree with my fellow professors, but she does seem to be a little aloof,” remarked Lockhart. “I had offered her several times to privately tutor her in the subject of Defense Against the Dark Arts, but she turned me down every time. I’m sure it is just nerves but I try not to be imposing at times and downplay my accomplishments as much as possible.”

“Yes, I think we can all take a lesson in modesty from you, Gilderoy,” said Snape in an emotionless tone of voice as he looked at Lockhart, several curses came to mind immediately that would improve the situation with Lockhart immensely. Snape wondered if Dumbledore had finally gone around the bend when he hired Lockhart. A trained monkey would do a better job, heck, an untrained monkey would do a better job.

“Thank you for the vote of confidence, Severus, I’m always sure I can count on you,” said Lockhart cheerfully, missing Snape’s sarcasm. Not for the first time, Snape wished he could have five minutes alone with Lockhart and use him as a guinea pig to test some of his more dangerous potions. It would be nothing less than he deserves.

“I’m sure we all have our concerns with the recent attacks, but we must not jump to conclusions and try to control the students from doing the same,” said Dumbledore, who knew of Elizabeth’s Parseltongue abilities from the battery of tests he ran on her and Harry, to determine which one had defeated Voldemort all of those years ago. It was many of the secrets that he had kept from her for her own good, just like she had to return to the Dursleys for her own good. “I do not believe that Elizabeth is the Heir of Slytherin and behind these attacks however. I remember the first round of attacks, they with much more frequency and right now there have been only been three in a period of five months. It is something that we do have to worry about but at the moment we must not jump to conclusions. Arrangements will be made to tighten security in the hallways, but more drastic measures will only be taken once it is certain this is as serious as the recent amount of Chamber of Secrets attacks. There is no need to get the parents in an uproar over something that might not be as serious as we believed.”

Dumbledore just sat there, calmly, he had a shrewd idea exactly how the attacks might have been happening, but putting the pieces together was something all together. Besides, he worried about Elizabeth and the status of her remaining at the Dursleys, she had to remain there for her own protection and the little evidence that he managed to get a glimpse of was very damning. He had to put more of his cards on the table than he would have liked to help sway the Wizengamot and there was always the possibility of blackmail from certain sources that was looming over his head. It took him nearly a minute to realize that the members of the Hogwarts staff were looking at him and he cleared his throat to continue the meeting.

“Now onto the other matters for this staff meeting,” said Dumbledore, evasively changing the subject. He had been leaned on heavily enough by the Board of Governors to do something about the attacks, even though there had only been three of them Dumbledore felt like he was burning the candle at both ends so to speak, between what was happening at Hogwarts and the upcoming guardianship hearing for the Girl-Who-Lived. He was beginning to feel all of his one hundred and fifty plus years but she had to remain at the Dursleys. Otherwise, Dumbledore felt the entire world might be doomed if anything happened to her.

-

Tom awakened, he was nearly knocked back into his self imposed stasis by that girl rejecting him, however he sensed a new presence, different, less powerful than Potter, but nevertheless a useful tool to achieve his aims.

...Serves her right, experimenting with things she doesn't understand, it landed her in the hospital wing. She's self centered, just because she's the Girl-Who-Lived, she thinks she can do whatever she wants.

The writing vanished and Tom could sense some confusion.

What are you?

I'm a powerfully magical learning aid. Rare, as there are so few of me made but I can help even the most magically weak witches or wizards help, but my former owner didn't appreciate the gifts I can offer. She thought she could just throw me away like any other book, she convinced herself that her power was something that was of her own doing and not with my help. Really, she was painfully average, if I do say so myself.

Who was your previous owner?

Tom could not believe his luck, the enchantments on the diary was drawing the new owner in. Whoever it was, they were of weak will power.

A girl by the name of Elizabeth Potter owned me previously but she tossed me out the window where you found me. I was only trying to help her broaden her potential but she thought she was better than me.

Why am I not surprised? She isn't anything special at all, is she? She used a magically enhanced aid to accomplish what she did. She doesn't deserve any of the praise or her high marks, it was all because of you. You are the secret to her successes.

In a matter of speaking, you would be considered to be correct. Elizabeth Potter owes all of her fame, all of her successes to me.

He could sense some agreement and now he had his hooks into the new owner of the diary. He was indifferent to the person writing back, he was not as intoxicated by the power as he was when the Girl-Who-Lived had written to him in the diary. If he played his cards right, he would get her back by using the new owner of the diary and would ensure the perfect vessel to return. Right now, this one would have to do.

My name is Tom, Tom Marvolo Riddle. What is your name?

-

The next day, Elizabeth had been released from the Hospital Wing where Lisa and Padma were waiting for her, standing outside. Elizabeth took a few nervous steps towards them, not knowing what to expect. In her heart, she hoped her friends would never turn their backs on her but she had known too much to never take anything for granted.

“Liz, just to let you know, we never believed you to be evil because of what happened in the Dueling Club, unlike most of the school,” said Lisa calmly, as she held several pieces of parchment in her hand, looking at her friend.

“Besides, anyone with half of a brain would know you were calling the snake off, and not calling it to attack,” added Padma. “While it is possible you might be related to Slytherin because he existed all those years ago and it’s hard to find out who his relatives are, we know for a fact you’re not behind the attacks.”

“No, I’m not,” said Elizabeth, who had enough time to think to realize all of this was Tom’s fault and not hers.

“Good, here are the notes from the last few days of classes that you missed,” said Lisa, as it was obvious they both thought Elizabeth would be blaming herself and if she had not had time to think about it, Elizabeth would be. “Also, Harry passed a message to us, to tell you that he wants a word with you as soon as possible.”

“I better get on that now, I’ll talk to you two, later,” said Elizabeth, as she knew Harry rarely made a big deal out of nothing and if he said it was urgent, it was urgent. Her footsteps quickened as she moved to talk to Harry.

-

“Okay Harry, what did you want to talk to me about?” asked Elizabeth when she managed to catch up with Harry, but he held up her hand in silence and pulled her into an empty classroom. He made sure no one was following them and locked the door behind them. The look on his face seemed to be anxious and Elizabeth guessed

immediately this was not a friendly chat. "Okay, Harry, what's wrong, you looked like someone died?"

"Well pretty close, as a few days ago when I went to retrieve the diary, it came up missing," said Harry and Elizabeth bit her tongue, eyes widening in horror. This was horrible, she could not believe what she was hearing.

"Do you think someone took it?" asked Elizabeth, lip trembling. She saw what that diary could do for a perfect and realized its danger. In hindsight, she wished she had not just simply chucked it out of an open window but to be fair, she was not really thinking clearly at the time. Harry looked, putting his hand on his chin and he had a thought expression on his face. Seconds ticked by before he managed to come up with an answer.

"It's a possibility that we shouldn't really ignore, but it is likely it got blown off the grounds into the Forbidden Forest at night, which is the best option right now, as it is unlikely anyone would ever come across it again," said Harry as he looked at Elizabeth. Much like he was, it looked like she doubted this possibility very much. "Another possibility is that a teacher found it, maybe Filch on one of his patrols for all we know and turned it into Dumbledore. It could have been destroyed and you know that Dumbledore wouldn't let anyone know about it."

"No, he wouldn't," said Elizabeth. "What if he really investigated the diary and found out my connection about it? That's something I don't need this close to the hearing, I'm this close from leaving those monsters forever and I don't want this to be held over my head. Dumbledore with the diary means its out of someone else's hands but at the same time..."

"He could find out something, yes, I know, I realize that Lizzie, but right now, we don't know anything, there have been no attacks, but the attacker could be just biding his time," said Harry. "I fear that another student might have picked it up."

“They won’t have a chance, I never expected anything wrong with it and began writing in it,” said Elizabeth and Harry placed a hand on her shoulder in a consoling manner.

“Charms were on it, it isn’t your fault what happened, I felt a compulsion to write in it myself once I came across it,” said Harry. “Now you told me his name was Tom, at least that’s what the diary said, but do you have anything other than that?”

“His full name was Tom Marvolo Riddle, maybe that’s something,” said Elizabeth with a frown and Harry just closed his eyes. There was something that told him he knew the significance of this name but his mind could not make the necessary connections. “Harry?”

“I don’t know, I’ll ask Mum over the holidays, but something about that name sounds familiar, but I can’t place it,” said Harry as he looked at Elizabeth, with a serious look on his face. “Now, Lizzie, you were through a traumatic ordeal but at the same time, you have the hearing coming up. Worry about that and try not to worry about what happened here.”

“How can I not worry about what happened?” asked Elizabeth but Harry had no answers. Still, he was right, she needed to focus less on what happened to the diary and more about the upcoming hearing. She needed to keep her head low and not get into any more trouble that would cast her into the negative light. She crossed her fingers that Rita Skeeter would never get a hold of the dueling club debacle, otherwise, there would trouble.

-

Lucius Malfoy sat in a chair in the drawing room of his mansion, sitting with a glass of brandy and the latest edition of the Daily Prophet, enjoying another scathing editorial about Albus Dumbledore, about how he was inept to deal with the attacks and the possibility that the Chamber of Secrets being opened. He had originally slipped the girl the diary in an attempt to eliminate her, to get the Council of Blood Purity off of his back, but taking down Dumbledore’s reputation was an expected bonus. He was glad that Dumbledore had felt the



heat lately. The scandal with where he put the Girl-Who-Lived had been rather hard on his reputation. Despite the fact he worked hard to cover up certain incidents that would have removed the girl from her relatives, Lucius remained a public figure in leading the outrage against the Dursleys. It allowed him to gain political support in many areas that he would not have normally. Rita tore down the Potter girl, but she still had her share of support because of her fame, even though most of it was sympathy. Still, there was the crowd that had wished the other Potter twin had survived and young Elizabeth Potter had perished. Mention of this viewpoint had been taboo for sometime, Lucius suspected Dumbledore had a hand in this, not wanting the ugly rumors that he had Harry Potter killed, because he was of no use to his plans, to be brought back up again.

Arthur Weasley was an unfortunate thorn in his side, but it was an expected one. Mostly, Weasley was hot air, just like his children. The girl had potential, Lucius would grudgingly admit, but the entire family had been for the most part been a bunch of useless blemishes on the Wizarding landscape.

“Dobby, is my dinner ready yet?” ordered Lucius and the house elf appeared, bowing to the floor, fearfully. He had planned to sneak out in another attempt to save Elizabeth Potter by injuring her enough to return her own. The vase had attempted to drop on her was not enough and his attempt to knock her down the stairs had inadvertently pushed another student down the stairs.

“Dobby is working on it, Master, just a few more minutes,” said Dobby.

“Punish yourself Dobby for dawdling,” said Lucius coldly and Dobby nodded, looking eager in the attempts for punishment and the house elf left. He returned to the days news, with the latest news about the upcoming Potter girl custody hearing.

-

Christmas had finally arrived and Elizabeth had resolved to put the matter of the diary out of her mind. In fact, the fun she was having

with Harry and his family, who would soon be her family if there was any justice in this world, blocked out any fears she had based on the diary. At this moment, Nymphadora was in the process of telling them about the recent events of Auror training.

“A year and a half down, only a year and a half to go,” said Nymphadora in a proud voice. “They’re actually letting us go on real missions, well kind of, mostly investigating wizards who use their powers to rob Muggle businesses. Other than that, it’s been nothing too exciting.”

“Now, dear, I don’t think they would want you to do anything too dangerous until you complete your training,” said Andromeda, as she smiled at her daughter but she just responded with a shrug.

“Well, you should be proud, as most of the Aurors don’t make it for a year and a half,” said Harry.

“So they’ve been telling us, but the second half is supposed to be the most brutal of all, we had Moody in the other day, lecturing us about watching our drinks and wand safety and magical concealments and...” said Nymphadora before she paused and took a deep breath, with a smile on her face. “CONSTANT VIGILANCE!”

“He’s still on that kick, I see, he’s been on that for years, age has only made him worse,” said Andromeda.

“I read about Moody, he seems like he’s interesting, no one caught more Death Eaters than him,” said Elizabeth.

“The best, he does seem like a stand up guy by all accounts and that’s a rarity in the Wizarding World,” remarked Harry dryly.

“A Slytherin too, which should dispel the all good Aurors are Gryffindors rumor,” said Nymphadora. “I don’t even know who started that rumor, it’s more like, all good drop outs are Gryffindors.”

The group laughed at this, including Andromeda, before she grew serious and turned to Elizabeth.

“Elizabeth, the hearing has been officially named for February 17th and while we got all of the evidence, I don’t think its wise to take any chances that something might happen, as the vote’s likely to be tight, no matter what we show them,” responded Andromeda as she sighed. She collected a great deal of evidence that would be in Elizabeth’s favor, but she had no idea if it would be enough for the corrupted Wizengamot. “So keep your head down and don’t do anything that will cause them to have any reason. The Parseltongue thing is unfortunate but it can be swept under the rug within two months, providing of course nothing else happens.”

“I’ll do that,” said Elizabeth, as she had planning on keeping out of trouble, even though it was had to do.

“Mum, have you ever heard of anyone named Tom Marvolo Riddle?” asked Harry.

“Why do you ask that?” responded Andromeda with a frown.

“I came across his name in a book and was wondering who he might be,” said Harry and he was telling the truth. Of course the book was enchanted, possessing his twin sister at the time but that was a moot point.

“I’m sorry Harry, I don’t know,” said Andromeda as Nymphadora shook her head but was curious and could sense that her adopted brother was keeping something away from her. “I’ll ask around, someone might know something, but right now, I can’t help you.”

“Thanks anyway,” said Harry, as he exchanged a brief hopeless look with Elizabeth, as they continued to talk about things that were a little more pleasant.

-

Elizabeth woke suddenly, the morning of Christmas Eve, to see the face of Dobby the house elf right staring right at her, with his wide

eyes and bat like ears drooping, as Dobby looked at her, rocking back and forth on the soles of his feet.

“You,” hissed Elizabeth angrily. “Don’t you realize how much trouble you got me into?”

“Dobby is sorry, Elizabeth Potter, but it had to be done for her own good,” said Dobby in an apologetic voice. “Dobby was horrified when he heard what the Dursleys was doing to Elizabeth, but at least she was alive, safe...”

“Listen to me, you filthy little thing, Vernon nearly killed me after what you did, what you be happy if I was dead?” asked Elizabeth as she looked at Dobby with thinly veiled disgust. “Draco had told you to stay away from me if I remember rightly.”

“Dobby had to disobey young master’s orders, he was hoping that the vase was enough but miss was looking out,” said Dobby and Elizabeth reached forward, her hands aimed for the creature’s throat but Dobby leapt backwards. “Please don’t be mad at Dobby, it was for the best.”

“Dumbledore said the same thing, but he was wrong and so were you,” said Elizabeth. “I know what I’m in danger of, it’s that accursed diary, so why don’t you just bugger off back home before I stuff you in your master’s stocking, in pieces.”

“Dobby can’t leave, until miss swears she won’t return to Hogwarts, because she might not leave alive this time,” said Dobby but before this could go much further, the door was pushed open and Harry stepped inside.

“I saw something was...oh it’s you,” said Harry as he looked at Dobby. He always thought that house elf was a bit touched in the head and he now continued his insane measures to keep Elizabeth from returning to Hogwarts.

“Master Harry, Dobby was just...” said Dobby and Harry looked at Dobby, with disinterest on his face.

“You better not be bothering Lizzie, when Draco told you not to, so I’m telling him tomorrow what you did and if I ever catch you in the same room as Lizzie again, I’ll tell Lucius and I doubt he’ll be too pleased with the situation,” said Harry and Dobby banged his head on the wall, wailing madly. “Leave now, punish yourself at home, just don’t let me catch you around here or there will be consequences.”

“Dobby understands,” said Dobby as he looked at Elizabeth hopelessly. He must warn her what his master done but he could not make her understand. Dobby vanished with a pop and Harry turned to Elizabeth.

“Are you alright?” asked Harry.

“Fine, that little...he admitted to nearly crowning me with that vase and there were a couple of other near misses that I about bet he was behind,” said Elizabeth. “I don’t know, I just want to rip his head off and mount it on the wall.”

“Yes, I could see where that would be appealing,” admitted Harry, as constant head trauma had caused Dobby to be very off. “Still, I’ll speak to Draco, but right now, we shouldn’t let this taint Christmas. It is a day of joy, not a day of frustration.”

“I agree with that,” said Elizabeth with a smile, one of the few genuine one’s that she had managed to given recently. It was the truth, Christmas was here and she vowed to enjoy it. She had sent out gifts to all of her friends a couple of days ago and was looking forward to what joys the holiday brought.

-

The joy of the holidays was great but it was time to return to Hogwarts. Elizabeth thought the mutterings would have ceased after a time but they had just increased. People were not about to give up the thought that she was evil just because she was a Parseltongue and that she was behind the entire Chamber of Secrets mess. No matter how true it was, it was far more complex than most of these

people could handle. The fact that there were no further attacks over the holidays had reinforced the belief of these people and Elizabeth tried her hardest not to lose her temper. With the hearing drawing nearer, it would reflect badly on her if she had cursed someone out of a temper. She was focused on maintaining a mostly positive public image as her time at the Dursleys was hopefully winding to a close.

“What now?” asked Lisa, bringing Elizabeth out of her thoughts, as she walked with her friends. Padma stopped shortly as well, as they were surrounded by a crowd of people. They had just returned from Charms class but the entire hallway was blocked.

“I don’t know,” said Padma with a shrug as she craned her neck upwards. “I can’t see anything, really, how about you, Liz?”

“No,” said Elizabeth and several people turned, mostly Gryffindors but some members of the other houses.

“There she is!” shouted one of the Gryffindors, pointing her finger at Elizabeth.

“Returned to the scene of the crime,” said another Gryffindor.

“I always knew she was dark,” responded Ron Weasley as he pointed at Elizabeth. He spent most of last year, obsessing over her and it was amazing how fast he turned against her when she was revealed to be a Parseltongue. “Guess You-Know-Who came after her because she would be competition. It got him blown up because he was darker than she would ever be.”

“Ronald, she couldn’t have done this!” shouted Hermione in a loud voice, who appeared particularly angry about the entire situation and Elizabeth was taken aback of Hermione Granger of all people defending her but the crowd parted, as teachers came down the hall, with McGonagall and Snape leading the charge.

The petrified form of another Muggleborn student had revealed Elizabeth’s darkest fear. The diary had slipped into the hands of someone else but the question was who.

That concludes lucky Chapter Thirteen. Coming up next is the custody hearing and some more drama involving the new owner of the diary. A transition chapter or two after that and then we step inside the Chamber.

## Chapter Fourteen: Fate In Their Hands

The latest attack had gotten everyone in an uproar. The third person being taken out by these mysterious attacks had caused many who dismissed this as a series of isolated incidents to take another look at what was going on. They feared that Hogwarts was no longer safe, mostly the Muggleborn students, but there were many half bloods who were on their guard as well. A lot of the pureblood supremacists were having a field day with this, pleased with the fact that so many Mudbloods were dropping down. The only thing that was a shame was that they were merely petrified and not killed. Still, the fact that the halls were a little less polluted was a cause for celebration from these closed minded students.

Elizabeth Potter was the number one suspect, not based on anything concrete but because of some circumstantial evidence and the fact that she was revealed to be a Parseltongue during the dueling club fiasco. The thing that ate her up inside was that she was responsible for the first attacks. The recent attack she had some blame for. She regretted throwing the diary out the window when someone, anyone could have found it. The thing that scared her the most was that it was hard to tell whether someone was being used as a pawn or willingly conspiring with Tom. She had not come to adults with her fears either, she really trusted no teachers right now. Individually, most of them were okay, but she did not want Dumbledore to get his hands on any information that would be used against her in the upcoming custody hearing. It was a small miracle that the attacks had not gotten too much press. It could have been a lot worse and Elizabeth had enough to deal about with the latest Rita Skeeter smear campaign about her character. She got a few nasty letters, calling her weak and foolish, saying she was a fraud because she allowed Muggles to kick her around. Yet, because of the laws against magical use, she had no way to defend herself at all.

“Liz, I wouldn’t worry about it, looking at the facts, people should realize that you had nothing to do with that,” remarked Lisa, bringing out her out of her thoughts. “You were in class at the time when the attacks happened.”



“Yes, I have that going for me, but how many people are willing to look at the facts?” asked Elizabeth. “The entire year in Ravenclaw and Slytherin as well knows I’m not guilty, not that most of Slytherin would want to give a half blood credit for anything as well. Still, even if the Gryffindors were in class, would they give up this senseless blaming of me? Would they think I used dark magic to be two places at once?”

“Well the only way you could be two places at once is a time turner and those are strictly regulated by the Ministry,” said Padma. “No one in their right mind is going to allow an underage witch to use one of those.”

“The person who’s behind this is bound to get caught sooner or later,” stated Lisa.

“They should be, at least in theory,” agreed Padma and Elizabeth just looked at the wall, as several students quickened their paces, as if they were terrified she would grow fangs and sink them into her. It could be anyone and that terrified her. With the custody hearing looming closer, she had to focus on that but the overwhelming specter of the new diary owner loomed. Harry was keeping an eye out as well but he could only do so much.

-

You seem troubled.

I’m troubled alright. I read three extra books in preparation for the new Transfiguration we did today. Yet, Elizabeth Potter, she finished it before I could and did it without even taking any notes either. She paid no attention to the theory and did it the wrong way.

Did she complete it correctly? Did she do with the teacher intended?

Yes, but that’s not the point? She didn’t follow the instructions properly, I study time and time again and she flaunts all rules of magical theory, doing things her own way. That’s not fair, the

teachers teach us these things for a reason, the fact that's how they're supposed to be done. It's what the textbook says.

If she completed it with the desired results, then it is the right way. You must understand that books have very little to do with magic. I'm merely an aid myself but not the only thing. The mind and creativity are the necessary elements of magic. The teachers instruct one way to do so but it's not the only way and the sooner you realize it, the better off you'll be in the end. Your heart is the right place and maybe she's flaunting her abilities a bit much, but she has her limitations. Stick with me and I'll help you surpass Potter in every way.

If I used you for everything, wouldn't it be cheating?

No, it wouldn't be, it would be enhancing your ability to learn. There are simple charms to be able to disguise me as a common textbook, where the teachers would never know. Keep with me and I'll make you a powerful witch beyond all belief. Elizabeth Potter could have been that witch but she was too arrogant to believe that she needed help. It is an arrogance that will be her fall. Do you trust me? I did lead to some good reading material that helped you with that History of Magic essay.

Yes, you did Tom, you're the only true friend I have. I don't know what I would have done on that essay without you. It was the first time I managed to get better marks than her in a subject, although Harry Black managed to get a better grade yet.

One mountain to climb at a time, you will be the smartest student in your year group. Just be patient and success will come. I believe you have the potential, as long as you won't be as short sighted to get rid of me with a little success. It will take a lot of hard work to fully take advantage of me, something that Elizabeth Potter could never appreciate.

I'm not her, I'll prove it. I'll stick with you until the very end.

That's all I ask.

-

Tom was disgusted, this vessel was just enough to carry out his plans of attack. All he had to do was to put up with the complaints of inadequacy, which were well founded. The power on the other end was inadequate was well, a small fraction of the power that Elizabeth Potter had. While the previous owner had some deep dark thoughts to feed off of, to increase his power, all Tom could sense from the newest owner was common teenage angst. Still, his plan was slowly taking shape. Getting the new owner to use the diary close to presence of Elizabeth Potter would give her a sense that he was haunting her. It would open up her mind and increase her need to have the diary back. Tom could feel the power that he needed to gain for his plans to unfold. In fact, there was so much power yet to be untapped. Whatever had caused the girl to defeat his older self could be felt but he could not reach it. He would refuse to give up; he would never stop trying to get his hands on the power. Even if he had to deal with a new owner that would not fulfill his lust for magical power, but given the proper help, she could be powerful enough to pique Potter's curiosity.

-

"Harry, how many unicorn horns are added to a confusion solution?" asked Luna with a frown.

"I believe it's three," said Harry and Draco responded with a nod, as they, along with Ginny, were working in the library, it was right before the hearings. There had been no further attacks as of yet.

"Yes, it's three," added Draco with a roll of his eyes. "It's one of the first potions I learned to make, I'm pretty sure I learned how to make it before I even started to walk. It's simple..."

"To you maybe," said Harry.

"Yeah, but if you add one too many horns or even a fraction of a horn too many, it causes horrific consequences," said Ginny as she sighed, checking the time. "I have to go, Detention with Filch."

“What did you do this time?” asked Luna curiously.

“I hexed Ron, for spreading those nasty rumors about Elizabeth being the Heir of Slytherin,” said Ginny and Harry responded with an approving nod, even though he was sorry that Ginny had to get detention over it. “He’s been vocal about him and what’s worse, I’ll be spending detention with Hermione Granger. She hexed him as well for doing the same thing. Two hours with that insufferable know it all, it will be a nightmare.”

“Could be worse, it could be with Lockhart,” said Draco. “There’s a bright side to everything after all.”

Ginny just shrugged with a smile, before she made sure that all of her things were packed away.

“I’ll see you all tomorrow morning,” said Ginny as she walked off, as Harry just looked at the table, before he made a couple of final notes.

“Any luck finding the diary yet?” asked Draco in a low voice so none of them could hear.

“No, nothing yet, I would be celebrating if I did, that thing out in anyone’s hands is bad news, the problem is, getting the diary away from the person who has it,” said Harry.

“It might not be anyone we know, it’s likely to be the suspect that’s least likely,” responded Luna in a calm voice. “I just hope there are no more attacks this year, it could have been any one of us.”

“It’s just been Muggleborns so far,” argued Draco but Harry just had an unsure look on his face. “You’ve had to hear all of the legends about Slytherin. Like it or not, he didn’t care much for those types. Half bloods, he was uncomfortable around but Muggleborns are something that he cared even less about.”

“I don’t wish to talk about it, the fact that people are getting attack is enough to cause some concern with me, more than enough in fact,” answered Harry as he scribbled a few more lines on his Potions

essay. "I don't wish to bring up this matter, I have things on my mind. With the Daily Prophet still having a go at Lizzie pretty much every day, I'm worried about how much the Wizengamot is going to be skewed about her at the hearing, no matter what we shove underneath their noses."

"Why don't you do what Father does?" asked Draco. "Bribe people, it has to work, there are a number of times where he should have been nailed by the Wizengamot about something but he slipped through the cracks."

"As enticing as that sounds, Dumbledore needs to be brought down and the best way to do it was to prove he's full of dragon dung in front of the entire Wizengamot," said Harry.

"I think she has a good chance of getting taken away from the Dursleys, people in this world mostly frown about magical children being left with Muggles, even there have been many times where people tried to push for laws to take Muggleborns away from their parents and put them with a new family," remarked Luna, vaguely remembering one of the few serious pieces her father did to the Quibbler.

"Those laws are bound to come up again, after what's bound to come out with the Dursleys," said Draco and he looked at Harry. "Is it worth it for the rest of the world?"

"Whatever happens, happens, I can't worry about everyone else's rights, I would lose my mind if I do," said Harry, as he looked over his essay before he yawned. "I just wished Dumbledore would have listened, I'm still trying to figure out what gave him the right to put Lizzie there in the first place. The Potters had to have a will."

"That's one of the great mysteries isn't it," said Draco. "You would think that someone was on the top of the list of enemies of He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named would have a will, especially a family as well off with the Potters, just as a safe guard measure. Dumbledore claimed once or twice that he was in charge of their affairs."

“I don’t know about that, one would think they would have a will, but the truth is, I don’t know what to think,” said Harry, who had the hearing, the drama involving the diary, and the fact that he would have to tell Elizabeth the truth sooner or later with the twin bond appearing to grow stronger after being nearly deadened completely thanks to Dumbledore’s interference. Right now, he was done thinking about these matters for the evening even though there would be bridges he would have to cross in the not so distant future.

-

Three days before the Wizengamot hearing, Albus Dumbledore sat outside the office of Amelia Bones, tapping his foot on the floor impatiently. While they got along well most of the time, there were many things where Amelia Bones and Albus Dumbledore did not see eye to eye for. The fact that Dumbledore employed a suspected Death Eater in Severus Snape, a man who Amelia believed was responsible for the death of at least one of her family members was one of these points. Also, Dumbledore’s handling of the entire Potter deaths was a sore point with her as well. Most of the fact had to do with the death of young Harry Potter, who by many accounts from people at the time, was still alive before he was removed from the wreckage, but critically injured. She expended little effort in holding back her belief that while Dumbledore did not outright kill Harry, he did less than he could have to help him live. That belief had been mostly lost over time, once people had moved onto other things, like trying to find the remaining Death Eaters. There were people that believed that Harry was the Boy-Who-Lived, although less. Those rumors had faded mostly over the years and Dumbledore was glad. If Elizabeth caught any word of them, she would ask questions that Dumbledore really had no interest in answering.

Still, Dumbledore suspected that Amelia might have pieced together the truth about the Potter twins over the years. She was a bright witch, among the top of her year at Hogwarts. Dumbledore waited, he needed to try and get Amelia on his side, he might have been able to swing the vote in the right direction. Convince her that while there was some circumstantial evidence that Elizabeth was not treated well, at least she was alive. That was all that mattered in the bigger picture

from now, she would need to be tried by constant adversity if they had a hope in defeating Voldemort for good.

“Okay, Albus,” said Amelia as she opened the door. “I’ve cleared some time out of my busy schedule to hear what you have to say but this best be worth my time, because I don’t have time for your half truths today.”

“I think it is essential you hear what I have to say, Amelia,” said Dumbledore in a calm voice as Amelia waved in Dumbledore, who sat down in a chair. “I’m still a bit uncertain about what you hope to accomplish by having this custody hearing for young Miss Potter.”

“Saving a girl from an abusive home environment sounds about right, don’t you think, Albus?” asked Amelia coolly as she looked back at Dumbledore. “Andromeda has been writing letters for years and I tried to force the issue to get the girl at least checked on. Then you say she is safe and everyone takes your word for the issue. I never quite believed that, I had heard a few rumblings about how certain parties were adamant on keeping Elizabeth Potter at the Dursleys. Bagnold and later Fudge, refused to even take matters seriously after a while but I took everything seriously. I knew this would come out someday.”

Albus sighed; there were times where he wished Harry was the one. It would be much easier to deal with a young boy, then a girl. He would be less vocal about the situation at hand. The female of the species were temperamental at times but he could not afford to fix the situation to suit him. Elizabeth was the one, the Chosen One, the one stated by the prophecy and it was essential she was kept inside a Muggle household to prevent her full powers from developing. They had a potential to rival his own and maybe Lord Voldemort in time, unless they were reigned in. There were certain things that Dumbledore did not fully understand with the circumstances of Voldemort’s defeat as well, that he needed to keep Elizabeth’s potential stunted for her own good.

“I understand your concerns but I believe the situation is overblown, children tend to blow things out of proportion sometimes,” said

Dumbledore carefully. "Elizabeth was sent to the Dursleys, they were her only family after all and she needed to be sent there for her own protection.

"Protection from what?" asked Amelia calmly and Dumbledore looked back at her, very uncomfortable now.

"It is my belief that Lord Voldemort is not as dead as the Wizarding World would like to believe," said Albus in a diplomatic manner and Amelia raised an eyebrow at this. "Yes, I do know the official Ministry stance on the matter but..."

"You know something, don't you, Albus?" challenged Amelia.

"Perhaps I do, Madam Bones," agreed Dumbledore, using her formal title, as he realized he was skating on thin ice, that was about to crack.

"I would be wasting my breath if I asked you what and technically it is out of my jurisdiction," said Amelia. "You have never given me one bit of proof that Elizabeth Potter is safe at the Dursleys and in fact, I've uncovered proof that it'll be a miracle if she does not go down a similar path like He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named. The background information I've ran on the Dursleys has dug up some disturbing information, potentially about the type of man that Vernon Dursley is. I would not trust him with a young, soon to be a teenage, girl, myself based on what I found out and that's just scratching the surface."

"Background check, I think I should have been informed of this, as I'm the Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot," responded Dumbledore in what he thought was a commanding voice.

"You would have just gotten in our way, rest assure Dumbledore, I'll give you a chance to bring forth whatever proof you have, but I think we both know that your hands are tied," said Amelia as Albus just sat there, with a twinkle in his eye. "We both know you did something that while not illegal, is highly frowned upon, to encourage the girl's alleged safety. Do know this that if the Ministry of Magic ever catches



a hint of you modifying the minds of Muggles again, we will have you brought on charges and stripped of all of your titles and gold.”

“I have no idea what you’re talking about, Amelia,” said Dumbledore.

“Of course you don’t, Albus, of course you don’t,” said Amelia as she looked at Dumbledore, not fooled for one second by his grandfatherly demeanor. “Now if you don’t have anything of value to add, I’m going to have to ask you to leave right now. I have things that must be done and you will only be getting in my way.”

“Of course, Amelia, I’ll be seeing you in a few days, I suspect,” said Albus and Amelia just responded with a nod, as Dumbledore walked from the office. She could see that he was worried and wondered exactly how much that was dug up on the Dursleys would affect him. Amelia tossed the latest Daily Prophet to the side, another charming piece by Rita Skeeter, this time criticizing the Ministry for spending so much time on a custody hearing for a girl who should be locked up in St. Mungos because she was likely to be mentally unstable because of what she went through. Once again, Rita managed to make plenty of friends with her sharp way with words. Nearly everyone who was anyone at the Ministry had been taken to task and this time Elizabeth Potter mess with the Dursleys was ensuring that she got plenty of work.

-

“Lizzie, the hearing’s tomorrow, I managed to clear it so I can miss today’s classes to be there with you for moral support,” said Harry and Elizabeth nodded, her mind was still on the new diary owner, but she tried to focus on what would be a pivotal day in her life.

“Thank you Harry, I really appreciate it,” said Elizabeth with a nod and a grateful smile. “I’m just worried...”

“That after everything that’s happened, the Wizengamot will just deny you the chance to leave the Dursleys,” offered Harry calmly and Elizabeth nodded but Harry just responded with a smile.

“Don’t worry Lizzie, everything’s going to work out alright, and I do mean everything,” said Harry and for a brief moment, Elizabeth wondered if Harry was trying to convince himself as much as he was trying to convince her. “Mum’s told me, the Wizengamot will have all the evidence to look at, they can’t force you back to the Dursleys if they look at the facts.”

“But will they look at the facts?” argued Lizzie and Harry just responded with a shrug of his shoulders. He wished he could tell her that it was that cut and dry but the fact remained that even he was having his doubts.

“They should if there is any justice in this world,” said Harry as he looked at Elizabeth. “The fact that you were sent to live with those monsters in the first place might be the strongest case against there being justice in this world. Don’t worry though, everything will turn out alright in the end, you got to think positively.”

“Thanks Harry,” said Elizabeth once again, Harry was there for her ever since she met him. “I appreciate everything you’ve done for me.”

“No problem,” said Harry as he looked at her. It was on the tip of his tongue but once again, he stopped from telling her. There was no need to drop that piece of information on her this soon to the hearing. She had enough on her mind right now without the revelation that she had a twin brother. “I would get some sleep if I was you, it’s going to be a long day tomorrow.”

“Right good night Harry,” said Elizabeth, giving him a hug, before she walked off.

“Good night Lizzie, I wish I could tell you how much that meant to me and for what reason,” muttered Harry, as he watched her leave.

-

The Wizengamot courtroom was abuzz with noise and Ministry officials made excuses to hang around close to the courtroom, to get the latest on the Potter custody hearing. The press was in full force,

especially Rita Skeeter, who had a smirk on her face, she was ready to find the worst in what happened, no matter what the outcome was.

“Harry, Elizabeth, good morning,” said Andromeda in a tired voice as she stood outside the courtroom.

“Morning, Mum,” said Harry, before he looked over his shoulder and saw Rita Skeeter making a movement right towards them. “Better get in there Lizzie, don’t want to be late, the Wizengamot doesn’t like people who are. I’ll be outside and be ready to greet you no matter what happens.”

Andromeda got what Harry was saying and Lizzie found her way inside the courtroom in the blink of an eye. Harry sat in a chair that was provided for visitors outside of the Courtroom, as he picked up the mutterings of several Ministry officials. What they were talking about, he did not know or care. While his physical body was not in the courtroom, his mind was there to be certain.

-

“We welcome you to the courtroom custody procedure for Elizabeth Lily Potter,” said a booming voice of the Wizengamot. “This hearing has come to light after allegations of abuse suffered by the girl at the hands of her appointed guardians. We are shocked to find that there was no formal process to appoint the girl to guardians, just the word of Albus Dumbledore that the Potters had put him in charge of their affairs. Several requests to check on the girl were denied and rumors of mistreatment have reached, most notably this past summer, when the girl was found by a friend with several bruises and a black eye, in a room secured with Muggle jail bars. Andromeda Black will present the case for Elizabeth Potter being removed from the Dursleys and Albus Dumbledore will represent the Dursleys, due to Ministry laws not permitting Muggles from being in courtrooms.”

The voice deadened and Elizabeth sat there, trying to remain calm but several eyes were on her.

“The Wizengamot recognizes Andromeda Black,” said Amelia Bones in a business like tone of voice.

“Thank you Madam Bones, I’ve met Petunia Dursley on two separate occasions and each occasion I have found her to be prejudice against anyone or anything magic,” said Andromeda. “I encountered her husband and found him to be crude and quite frankly temperamental. Several pieces of information I found sent warning bells towards Vernon Dursley. He has been involved in no less than six lawsuits, regarding sexual harassment of female employees at his workplace and a staggering eleven lawsuits based racial discrimination. Oddly enough, all of the charges have been dropped but no one seems to remember exactly how or why.”

Andromeda took a deep breath, as the details of these lawsuits were passed around. It did not matter that they were all thrown out; it raised an unfortunate implication on Vernon’s character. Elizabeth’s hands clenched, she could sense Dumbledore’s involvement in getting several of these lawsuits overturned. The Muggles might have intervened about her being at the Dursleys much sooner and quite frankly, being in an Orphanage would have been much more appealing.

“Elizabeth Potter has been vocal about her treatment at the Dursleys, but she has been just as vocal to her Muggle teachers,” said Andromeda. “I dug up several reports of complaints to teachers, that had been disregarded and there is no evidence that they were followed up. Including an eye witness account of Elizabeth and Vernon Dursley getting into an argument, where Vernon shoved her down to the ground outside. The reason was because Elizabeth got a better grade than her cousin on a test. We have reason to believe this is not the first instant of this and she suffered a broken arm as a result of this.”

Elizabeth vaguely remembered this happening and she also remembered the police coming but then leaving, with Vernon looking very angry about something and muttering about freaks at his doorstep. Something was clicking in her mind and Dumbledore was

trying hard not to sweat like a pig in a sauna. The incompleated police report and the reports filed were passed around.

“How do we know they are not fabricated?” asked Dumbledore.

“Because they have been tested by Unspeakables to prove their authenticity,” said Amelia in an irritated voice. “And Albus, I must remind you not to speak out of turn. You will have your chance to state your case for the Dursleys, just be patient.”

“My apologies, Amelia,” said Dumbledore but he knew this was not going his way. It was fortunate that he might be able to succeed yet but he could only imagine what his enemies would take this information as.

“I believe the next step would be to call Elizabeth Potter up to give her side of the story,” said Andromeda.

“Miss Potter, I would like to ask you a few questions,” said Amelia and Elizabeth nodded. “How many times have your relatives harmed you in any way?”

“Too many to count,” said Elizabeth and several of the members of the Wizengamot muttered, in disgust, despite the fact she was the one being harmed. She felt rather uncomfortable to begin with, she did not like admitting weakness.

“Do you mind telling us the first time you remember them doing so in any way?” asked Amelia gently.

“When I was three and a half, maybe four, I burned dinner, Vernon yelled at me for an hour, calling me a little freak that wouldn’t amount to anything and threw me in my cupboard with three days without food,” said Elizabeth as she looked at Amelia, right in the eyes, as she turned.

“What kind of monster makes a child cook at the age of four?” muttered one of the members of the courtroom.

“She’s lying, remember what she gets up to that school, my daughter wrote, told me she’s a Parseltongue, she should have her wand snapped and sent back to them forever, serves her right anything she gets,” muttered another member of the court and Elizabeth tried to ignore them.

“Did you ever have a sense that they ever cared about you in any way?” asked Amelia.

“No, never, I tried to please them, but nothing I could do would ever make them happy so I gave up and my life was better for it, I got better grades than Dudley and always got punished for it, every time Vernon was denied a promotion I got punished, everything was my fault and I was ridiculed, called a freak, Dudley and his gang pounded me, leaving me bleeding but I got yelled at for tracking blood all over the carpet,” said Elizabeth who was picking up steam with what she was saying. “No one ever believed me, not even Professor Dumbledore, when I told him last year that I was being mistreated there. He gave me some excuse about me being safe but he never told me why.”

“Yes, I can see why that would be frustrated,” said Amelia who decided to end this line of questioning, as the evidence was passed around, including the grisly pictures of that night before Elizabeth’s second year at Hogwarts. “We have heard one side of the story and Albus, I believe you have something to say in favor of keeping the girl at the Dursleys.”

Albus took a deep breath, before he stood up, adjusting the angle in which he was sitting a fraction of an inch, before he turned to face the Wizengamot fully.

“Yes, as I have told you, the Dursleys are the only remaining family of Elizabeth Potter and it was important that she would be sent there, after the defeat of Lord Voldemort,” said Dumbledore and he paused, to allow most of the court room to wince at the name of the most feared Dark Lord that had ever lived. “Many of his followers still remained at large as was evident with many attacks in the years after Voldemort, in fact up until five years ago. So I was concerned and

since Lily and James Potter had left me in charge of their daughter should anything happen, I was responsible for putting her in a place. The Dursleys had their flaws but I knew that Petunia would never harm her niece and would keep her husband in line. As for young Dudley, children will be children and they tend to be rough. Still, judging by the fact that Elizabeth is here among us today, I feel no hesitation in saying that I was right that she was safe.'

"Proof that she was safe, Albus," challenged Andromeda who knew that Dumbledore would need to throw his cards on the table to ensure a unanimous decision from the court.

"I'm afraid the proof lies in the fact that Elizabeth Potter is still alive, there is no better proof that I can offer than that," said Dumbledore. "She may have perished in a Wizarding home but hiding her in a Muggle home would have ensured she remained alive. Was it the best of homes? No, but she was safe and alive and that was all that matters."

"Let's put this matter to a vote," said Amelia, who barely made an effort to hide her disgust for Albus Dumbledore. The saddest thing was he honestly believed he was doing the right thing. "All those in favor of Elizabeth Potter remaining at the Dursleys."

An extraordinary number of hands shot up and Elizabeth's heart began to flutter, as she tried to count the number of hands. Everything was crashing down, she would return, she looked at her shoes, hiding the absolute look of anger. They had taken Dumbledore's word once again over everything else.

"All those against Elizabeth Potter being sent back to the Dursleys," said Amelia and once again, many hands shot up. Elizabeth resigned herself to the fact that this was not going her way but Andromeda gave her a hopeful smile, trying to tell her that it was not over yet by a long shot. "The votes are in; we have twenty six to twenty four in favor..."

This is where Elizabeth Potter held her breath in.

“Elizabeth Potter being removed from the custody of the Dursleys,” said Amelia in a relieved voice, as she looked at the paper from the magically counted tally in her hand. She tried hard to play favorites but this severely tested her ability and Elizabeth’s jaw nearly dropped. She had just barely cheated the system and one thought echoed through her head.

No more Dursleys.

No more Dursleys.

No more Dursleys.

Over and over again, Elizabeth felt like doing a dance right there in the courtroom, the nightmare of the Dursleys was over, she could finally live without them.

Still despite all of that, she could not feel like she had just narrowly dodged a bullet. If the vote had swung slightly the other way, she might have never had another chance to be removed from the custody of the Dursleys.

She tuned out most of the rest of the hearing, but did pick up on the fact that Andromeda was named her temporary guardian, until a formal adoption procedure could be held over the summer. That meant she could live with Harry and his family. It felt like something she had always dreamed about for her entire life.

-

“No more Dursleys!” shouted Elizabeth in a triumphant voice as she walked towards Harry, with a smile on her face, everything over the last few months forgotten. The press, the mutterings about her being evil, and even Tom’s manipulations through the diary, they had all been forgotten.

“Really, Lizzie, that’s great, how close was it?” asked Harry in a cautious voice.



“One vote, but who cares, the ending result’s what matters,” said Elizabeth as Harry felt thrilled about the happiness in his sister’s voice.

“I’m glad to see you’re happy, but the Portkey is leaving to take us back to Hogwarts in about thirty seconds, we can tell the others the good news right away,” said Harry and Elizabeth nodded, as they touched the Portkey, a button that said “VOTE FUDGE” on it. They appeared in the hallways of Hogwarts, it was just a few minutes before dinnertime and the moment they entered the hallway, Harry came to a decision. He had to tell Elizabeth and had to do it right now, while he had the nerve worked up.

“Harry, I thought for a moment I would be sent back, really now, I finally get the family I’ve always wanted,” said Elizabeth in an excited voice before she looked at Harry. “You’re like the brother I never had, but now it’s official, isn’t it?”

Harry was floored; he did not know what to say, except for maybe the truth. He had thought he had put this off long enough.

“Lizzie, there is something I want to say,” said Harry calmly and Elizabeth looked at him, curiosity on his face. “I’m...”

“Mr. Black, Miss Potter, I see you’re back from the hearing,” interrupted the voice of Professor McGonagall as she walked up towards them. “There is something you should see, to the Hospital Wing quickly before dinner.”

Elizabeth’s heart sank as she followed McGonagall, Harry following, all thoughts of telling Elizabeth brushed under the rug right now. His mind swam with all sorts of possibilities but he thought that it could not be good, whatever it is.

“I don’t know what, but there’s been a triple attack from the Heir of Slytherin,” said McGonagall in a would be calm voice but Harry could see that she was struggling to remain calm under pressure.

“Great, I suppose this is my fault even though I was at the custody hearing,” said Elizabeth.

“Now no one is accusing you, Miss Potter,” said McGonagall but Elizabeth just responded with a snort. “Well a few people are accusing you, but I would not pay them no mind and we’re here...I’ll let you see for yourself.”

Elizabeth gasped, reaching the door first. She spotted Lisa and Padma lying on the beds, the latest victims of the Heir of Salazar Slytherin. The thrill that Elizabeth had after never having to return to the Dursleys had been replaced with anger and guilt as she saw her two friends lying on the bed. Then when she saw the third figure on the bed, she gasped and turned to Harry.

“Harry, I don’t want you to see this, but you’re going to have to,” said Elizabeth in a somber voice as she turned to Harry and Harry walked inside. The sight he saw, he refused to believe, but he could not deny it at all.

Ginny Weasley lied on the hospital bed, her face normally full of so much life and energy, looking as if it was carved out of stone. She was petrified, just like the rest of them.

The fallout from this chapter and then we step inside the Chamber of Secrets. Coming up soon.

## Chapter Fifteen: Message Of Blood

Word of the latest three attacks moved throughout Hogwarts faster than imagined. By the next day, everyone knew of the three people who had been attacked and were coming to their own conclusions. Few knew or care, Elizabeth Potter was taken away from her abusive guardians. In fact, despite the fact that there was no way she could have carried out the attacks, there were a few irrational people who state that she was guilty. In fact, many still held the belief that she had an accomplice, to throw the teachers off the trail. The few rational people were worried what might happen next. The first few attacks had been only been against Muggleborns and a cat, but now people were worried. They felt chilled, knowing anyone could be next, anyone could be a target and everyone was worried.

Harry was a wreck after what happened. It was bad enough that his sister was the victim of the constant mockery in the hallways, mostly by Gryffindors and these taunts had gotten slightly more mean spirited since the attacks had occurred. However, his oldest and best friend was victimized by whoever had the diary now. Riddle may have used them as a pawn but he still felt some anger towards whoever picked up the diary and mostly himself. If he had only been a bit more quicker in picking up the diary, none of this would have happened. He could have prevented this from happening, the danger would have passed but a small part of Harry that was still thinking rationally wondered what he would do with the diary once he had it. He did not trust Dumbledore at all. The Ministry was out of the question. His mother was not as knowledgeable about such things. He thought every agonizing moment about what have been and what had happened to Ginny, how he felt responsible. Still, one agonizing thought kept visiting him each and every second.

It could have been him and it was intended to be him. He felt it in his gut; Elizabeth mentioned once that Tom had seemed to be some contempt for Harry. He wondered if the attack had had him in mind. He was with Ginny that morning after all and whoever owned the diary, could have been stalking them. Tom still carried out the attack and Harry was at a loss to know whether or not the person was willing.

He could not even enjoy his sister being freed from those monsters. He very nearly told her and wondered if the opportunity would ever present itself again. Now did not seem like the right now, in fact it seemed like the wrong time.

“So, I guess you’re blaming yourself,” said Draco, as he brought Harry out of his thoughts, Luna stood there. Draco wore his mask of indifference but Harry could detect worry. He was neutral towards this entire mess but now that three purebloods were attacked and one of them was one of his real friends, he was concerned for his own well being. Understandable, if Harry may say so himself.

“We’re all taking this hard, I saw Elizabeth this morning and giving what we know, I can’t really blame her,” said Luna. “Ginny was just there...”

“That’s the thing, Lizzie could have written about all of his us in that diary,” muttered Harry, as he looked around. There was no one in this corridor right now.

“I did manage to get some information from Father about the Chamber of Secrets and I think you can appreciate how difficult that is,” remarked Draco and here Luna looked curious and Harry even averted his attention away to listen. “Last time, it was opened fifty years ago, a Muggleborn died.”

“Who?” asked Harry.

“That’s been hushed up mostly, along with the person who did it, but I have a feeling that Father knows something,” said Draco and Harry nodded, Lucius Malfoy did have a way of accessing information that he should not normally have. “Think she remembers anything...”

“No and I don’t want to really bring up any memories,” said Harry. “Dumbledore can deal with it, after what he pulled yesterday.”

“But you won,” argued Luna. “She’s out of there.”

“By the slimmest of margins, Dumbledore tried to play the “she’s safe because I said so and I don’t owe you any information” card,” answered Harry with a tone of bitterness in his voice.

“I think age has made a fool out of Dumbledore but he’s always been a bit off,” said Draco. “The sad thing is that I really think he believes that he’s right about everything. Hogwarts might be closed sooner than we think.”

“Ministry’s threatened to do that a lot over the years, because of Dumbledore, never came close to happening,” responded Harry, as if he had a knut for every time the Ministry made threats about Hogwarts, he would be rich.

“Well purebloods have never been really attacked before,” argued Draco before he shrugged. “This entire mess, it’s just odd any way you look at it. The Chamber of Secrets has never been found in a thousand years and all of the sudden these attacks are happened. I don’t think it’s anyone in Slytherin who got the diary or at least no one is acting stranger than you normally do.”

“Or Riddle’s hiding it,” responded Harry.

“Before you ask, no I didn’t ask Father who Riddle was, trust me, that will lead to a line of uncomfortable questioning that I don’t want to deal with,” said Draco. “At the very least, maybe Dumbledore will lose his power, I don’t know if you read in the Daily Prophet...”

“The Board of Governors have been meeting regularly over the past year, yeah I know,” answered Harry as he walked forward, looking down the hallway, thinking he had better get some breakfast.

-

“Good morning Elizabeth,” said Luna with a smile as she sat down next to the Potter girl at the Ravenclaw table. Elizabeth looked grateful for the company. “I would ask how you’re doing, but that would kind of be a silly question after what happened yesterday.”

“I’m holding up better than I expected, it was just a shock that Lisa and Padma was petrified and Ginny too, Harry’s taking it really hard,” said Elizabeth as she looked at her plate, it had kept her from having to look at the accusing stares around the Great Hall that was coming from at least seventy five percent of the students in the school. “I just wish I would have been able to celebrate what happened...”

“Understandable, I don’t know what’s going to happen but once people think about it, they’re going to realize there is no way it can be you,” said Luna. “A few people might but we can do without their opinions. We both know what’s really happening and soon, more people will figure out that there is no way that it could be you.”

“I just wish I knew who it was,” stated Elizabeth as she looked at the Gryffindor table, where Parvati Patil and Lavender Brown were both glaring at her. Parvati obviously blamed one person for her twin being petrified and was just another Gryffindor, but she was not going to do anything more than glare. She caught a few instances of Ron Weasley loudly saying that he hoped to get Elizabeth alone to make her pay for what she done to Ginny to his dorm mates. Neville looked uncomfortable but he did not seem to be able to speak up in her defense. Elizabeth clenched her fist, even if she was the heir, why would she attack her friends? If she attacked someone it would be someone like Lockhart or Dumbledore. Maybe Ron Weasley, the way he was acting.

“I know, that is a sentiment we all share,” said Luna.

“It’s a little disheartening to be called an evil Parseltongue who should have died with my parents,” said Elizabeth but Luna just looked at her, attempting to find the right words, but it was difficult when the majority seemed to be against a person.

“I’ve been called worse and believe me, your parents would be ashamed at how these people were treating you if they were half as good as everyone believes them to be,” said Luna and Elizabeth nodded, reading her mother’s diary on and off had gave her a sense that her parents were good people. Flawed at times yes but who was not.

-

“I don’t know why everyone is so gloomy, nothing can harm you in this classroom while I’m around,” said Lockhart in a double Defense Against the Dark Arts class with the Hufflepuffs and the Ravenclaws a couple of weeks after the attacks. “Besides, the heir, whoever it is, has gone into hiding, he would get caught and I’m close to doing so right now, he just has to slip up a little bit. I just hope no one else gets to him first, because I’d like to have some words with him for putting the students of Hogwarts in danger.”

“What are you going to do, hit him with your blow dryer?” muttered Harry under his breath and Elizabeth gave a smile, strained. Despite that fact, making fun of Lockhart no longer had its charm.

“Nevertheless we do have a class to instruct here and while you know that I hate talking about myself, I believe you were to read chapters three through four of Wanderings With Werewolves over the past week,” said Lockhart. “To prove how much you’ve learned, you will take a quiz right now, composed of twenty questions. You have thirty minutes to complete the quiz. Here you are and good luck.”

Harry looked at the quiz with disgust. Lockhart had managed to include a few mildly accurate facts about werewolves that would have been adequate quiz taking material, even though that knowledge seemed to be plagiarized. Still everything had to do with Gilderoy Lockhart and his wonderful exploits in dealing with the werewolf menace. Normally Harry would have just filled in with sarcastic responses to the question, it really did not matter anyway what he did from week to week, as long as he passed the final exam. He wrote in what he could remember, disgusted with every word he remembered. His mind was still with Ginny and her lying in the Hospital Wing. The owner of the diary was still out there but where was the question.

-

I can’t believe they are giving her credit for these attacks. It’s not like she would even be able to pull out a petrification spell. That’s

advanced dark magic, I remember reading it a book. It would be hard to even get a book on the subject.

So now you're angry that she's getting credit for the bad as well.

I worked hard to study and every time I look, she's getting all of the credit. Snape ridicules me every day, calling me an Insufferable Know It All for actually managing to read the textbook and sneers at the slightest imperfect of the potion. She doesn't follow the instructions at all and she gets all the credit.

Be patient, you're beating her in some instances.

Yes, I manage to get ahead of her slightly in Charms and Transfiguration but Potions, no matter what help you give me, Snape still treats my work the same as he always does, even though it is as good as hers. Besides...I'm not sure it's you anyway, her work could be sliding because of her friends in the hospital wing. I would be worried too...that is if I had any friends.

You don't have friends, because everyone is distracted by the Girl-Who-Lived. She stole away people who might have been your friends and is just like the rest of them. She's jealous of your intelligence. Nothing but smoke and mirrors, but her tricks will have to run out later. Don't feel sorry for her, she uses her friends to make herself look good, just like she used me.

Yes, Tom, I should have seen it. Now she had the audacity to go against Dumbledore, he's a great wizard, she should have done what she said. Her relatives mistreated her or so she says. I don't believe it and now the Ministry is bending over backwards for her. I don't know, it's because I'm a Muggleborn.

Exactly, they're against you but you must prove you can be as strong as them by any means necessary.

Now, I don't know about that, I don't want to hurt anyone.

Would they offer you the same consideration? I think not.



You're right Tom. Thank you, I can always count on you with putting everything into its proper perspective. I don't know how my life would be without you to talk to.

That's what I'm here for, to make sure you get everything you deserve and you will get what is properly yours in the end. You can count on it.

-

Harry walked the hallways of Hogwarts at night, under the pretext of returning a book to the library before it closed up. The truth was he was taking the long way back. He briefly considered stopping by the Hospital Wing to visit Ginny, but security was rather tight. The hallways were pretty much deserted, except for the occasional ghost. Harry managed to keep on the less travelled paths, as he stopped at the sound of footsteps. While he was not intending to run into trouble, he still wanted to see who else would be out and about at this time of night. He kept a good enough distance to get far away as possible, just in case it was the person behind the attacks. As he managed to get in position for a look, he saw three people in the hallway. One was Albus Dumbledore, who looked in the midst of arguing about something and the other two were Lucius Malfoy and Cornelius Fudge, the Minister of Magic.

"I'm sorry Albus, but it has to be done, the man is simply the number one suspect and it relieves the parents anxieties, to see something being done," said Fudge in an apologetic voice. "He was accused the last time, he only escaped Azkaban on a technicality. I was willing to let everything pass but with the attacks, something has to be done or it will be the end of my career."

"I think you're making a mistake, Hagrid is not the heir of Slytherin, it is simply impossible," said Dumbledore and Harry stifled a laugh. He had encountered the Hogwarts gamekeeper a few times, he was a large man, but did not seem to be the type to even hurt a fly. Not to mention the fact that he was not someone who appeared to be cunning enough to pull off something like this. Harry had heard rumors that Hagrid had liked to drink and it had loosened his tongue.

“I agree with the Headmaster on this point, I doubt Rubeus would be able to pull this off but at the same time, we could never be too careful and the events of the next few weeks will validate whether the right thing is done or not,” said Lucius smoothly. “Still, Albus, I can’t hide the fact I’m concerned about your ability to distinguish the safety of our children given what happened with young Miss Potter.”

“Now, Lucius, Elizabeth was safe at there...” said Dumbledore.

“The Ministry has since investigated a bit into Vernon Dursley and found him to be unfit to care for a goldfish, much less a young girl and I believe they will be filing a ruling that Vernon and Petunia Dursley will be barred from having any magical children in their house,” responded Lucius and he turned to Fudge. “Isn’t that right, Minister?”

“Correct, Lucius,” answered Fudge in a calm voice. “I found it appalling that you couldn’t have noticed what was occurring in the Dursley residence, but I’m sure it could be excused to all the work you have to worry about. Still people are concerned.”

“Indeed, Albus, the Board of Governors have met and while we don’t like to normally remove a Headmaster in mid year, we want to temporarily suspend you for your duties as Headmaster for Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry for the rest of this year, pending a further investigation,” responded Lucius with a smirk and for good reason. This was one time where he did not have to really blackmail anyone to get a ruling, as he handed Dumbledore the documentation. “Now I believe you can see all of the names of the Governors, signed for your temporary order of suspension and the investigation.”

“Lucius, I don’t know, keeping Dumbledore here might keep the attacks under control,” said Fudge in an uncomfortable voice. “I was thinking that we could keep him here but under the watch of a Ministry approved assistant Headmaster, to monitor his actions and give us regular reports.”

“An admirable course of action Minister, but the number of complaints have been staggering, it’s just because of the Potter girl

hearings but rather the attacks, the parents want to feel safe and secure, with their children being in a castle away from home,” said Lucius. “If Dumbledore is unable to do a good enough job in doing so, someone else might be able to. It’s just like with Hagrid, he might not be the cause of the current problem, but it is an act of good faith.”

“I will graciously step down Lucius, if that is what the Board of Governors had decreed,” said Dumbledore tactfully. “But I don’t know if it will solve the problem or not, but if the Board of Governors feel it will help then I will step down. Just remember that the worst may be yet to come.”

“Perhaps, Albus, but no matter how this turns out, I do wish you all of the best, we will miss your style of running Hogwarts and your philosophies on keeping children safe, they were unique to say the least,” said Lucius and Fudge just looked back at Lucius.

“I best be going, I have a press conference in the morning, new policies to announce,” said Fudge as he yawned, as they walked their separate ways.

Once they were no longer distracted, Harry was gone. He wondered exactly how much Lucius knew that he was not telling. A brief thought echoed in his mind that Lucius had something to do with what was happening and with the diary. There was nothing Harry could do to prove it, only circumstantial evidence and the Minister would believe Lucius Malfoy over a twelve year old no matter what the cause. Still from the moment that Dobby showed up, Harry suspected that something was up and Lucius was in close proximity with Elizabeth that day in Diagon Alley where she was likely to have acquired the diary. His mind put the pieces together slowly but the problem was finding something other than coincidences.

With Dumbledore gone, Harry was not sure what to feel. In theory, he would be glad that Dumbledore would be out of Hogwarts and would not be able to do anything to them for Elizabeth getting removed on the Dursleys. On the other hand, a Dumbledore out of sight was not exactly a comfortable thought.

Besides, he would come back. Dumbledore seemed like the type that would rise from the ashes when people had counted him out. Harry was not about to begin to assume that he had seen the last of Albus Dumbledore. He made his way back to the Hufflepuff Common Room, but knew he would be unable to sleep, with the fact that the owner of the diary was still out there and would likely lie low until they were ready to make their next move. Whatever that next move was.

-

Time had passed quickly at Hogwarts and exams were rapidly approaching. Many in the school were on edge because of the attacks and were appalled at the fact that exams were coming up. With Professor McGonagall as the new temporary Headmistress, she was plowing along like nothing was out of the ordinary. Harry actually sort of agreed with that. It would give him something to keep his mind off of the fact that Ginny was in the Hospital Wing petrified, even though it appeared to have little success so far. He was not the only one who was preoccupied, as he sat in the library, with Elizabeth on his side and Luna sitting across from them. Draco unfortunately had been unable to join them today, as Pansy Parkinson was in one of her moods where she was following Draco around like a little lost puppy dog. Elizabeth looked over the textbook before she slammed it shut.

“I don’t even know how they expect us to remember this stuff, besides Hogwarts is going to be closed with one more attack,” said Elizabeth in a frustrated voice. “Who is it anyway?”

“We don’t know Lizzie,” said Harry as he looked at her.

“I can almost feel Tom stalking me at times,” responded Elizabeth. “I don’t know how, he’s in the diary, but whoever has the diary is close to a regular basis.”

“In this is true, then the new owner is in our year,” said Harry as he looked at Luna who shrugged.

“I tried to look up about Tom Riddle, couldn’t find anything, except his name on a plaque in the trophy room that I glimpsed,” answered Luna. “Special Services Award for the school, fifty years ago, but as for what’s petrifying the students, I think we have a better idea. It has to be a serpent of some sort, but what.”

“There aren’t too many books about snakes in the school, because they are considered dark magic and only mentioned in passing in magical creature books,” answered Harry.

“Yeah it will be a one in the million chance,” stated Elizabeth as she was so focused on the book she was reading, she did not notice Hermione walk past her, muttering under her breath. “Who is Tom Riddle?”

“Maybe he changed his name,” suggested Luna and both Harry and Elizabeth exchanged looks, before they responded shrug.

-

“Why are you making me do this?” said the diary owner.

“Because I can” hissed a voice in the owner’s ear. “Now be a good girl and write a little message on the wall, telling them that you will remain in the Chamber of Secrets forever.”

“I trusted you,” moaned the diary owner.

“And that was your first mistake and the most fatal one you will ever make,” responded the voice. “You will help me get what I want and you will die for it, you foolish little Mudblood.”

Seconds later, the owner was forced to conjure a dagger where she sliced her wrist. She sobbed but her eyes rolled into the back of her head as her hand moved forward, scrawling the following message on the wall with her own blood.

The Heir Strikes One Final Time, One Last Time, the Mudblood Granger Lies in the Chamber of Secrets, Rotting Forevermore.

If You Think You Can Stop Me For Good This Time, You Know Where To Find Me. Any Blood is On Your Hands, Potter.

A short chapter, as the obvious owner of the diary is revealed.

Coming Up Next, Harry and Lizzie Square Off Against Riddle and the Monster of Salazar Slytherin deep within the Chamber of Secrets.

## Chapter 16: Chamber of Secrets

“Elizabeth, I know what you’re thinking, but this is a trap,” said Harry, as he looked at Elizabeth, as she stood outside of the Ravenclaw Common Room. The message was placed in an area where she was able to see it and it was done by design. Riddle was baiting her into coming.

“I know it’s a trap, that much is obvious, but Granger is just as much as a victim as I was,” answered Elizabeth. “I don’t like her but the fact is that Tom manipulated her into using the diary. You told me that the diary had a compulsion on it and she’s not really that powerful. If succumbed she would have succumbed. I can’t just stand back and do nothing.”

“No, I suppose you couldn’t,” agreed Harry, who wondered if Riddle had someone escaped the diary. It sounded absurd, but it was a theory. “The truth is, do you even remember where the Chamber of Secrets is? He manipulated you and you said you were having black outs. When he was taking you on a joyride so to speak, you were out of it.”

“I have flashes in nightmares,” admitted Elizabeth grudgingly and Harry looked at her in surprise. This was the first time that she had mentioned such a thing and Harry moved over, before he gave her look. “I don’t know if its anything, but I see a bathroom, run down and an Out of Order sign. And I hear moaning, but its all in a fog and right now I can’t really remember anything other than that.”

Harry suddenly remembered something that Nymphadora had told him years ago and he turned to Elizabeth, a bit of a strained, triumphant look on his face but he heard footsteps coming from behind him. He grabbed Elizabeth and coaxed her behind a tapestry, before they spotted Gilderoy Lockhart walking down the corridors, in a bit of a hurry, towards his office.

“There is a ghost that haunts a toilet in this school, named Moaning Myrtle,” responded Harry suddenly and Elizabeth looked at him with a

surprised look. "The bathroom is always out of order because she cries, it floods the bathroom on a regular basis and no one uses it."

"I heard Filch complaining about it before and I heard other people as well, that could be the entrance," said Elizabeth before she paused. "Salazar Slytherin put an entrance in a girl's bathroom! No wonder anyone did not find it over the years."

"That's the cunning part about it," responded Harry and Elizabeth moved forward but Harry looked at her. "And where do you think you're going?"

"I'm going to into that bathroom and find the entrance of the Chamber of Secrets, its time I face Tom," responded Elizabeth and Harry looked at her with a stern expression on his face.

"Elizabeth Lily Potter, there is no way you are fighting a dangerous madman and a creature that's dangerous on your own," responded Harry and Elizabeth opened her mouth to protest. "Unless of course I'm coming with you."

Elizabeth looked at him before she responded with a nod. The two walked down into the Chamber, Harry had a score of his own to settle with Tom, before they moved down towards the entrance to the Chamber of Secrets.

-

"Lizzie, would this be the entrance, maybe?" whispered Harry, as he heard Moaning Myrtle's wailing from his toilet, he did not want to risk a confrontation with the ghostly girl. Elizabeth looked at the side of the sink, as she strained to remember, but she saw a small drawing of a snake on the edge of the sink. She nodded slowly, another flash buried in the subconscious, in fog of her mind.

"Yes, Harry, that would be it, I think, I remember it, at least I think I remember it," answered Elizabeth in a low voice as she looked at the drawing of the snake, but she struggled to remember how she



opened it the last time. "The problem is, I don't know what to do or how to open this thing?"

"Maybe say open to it in Parseltongue," suggested Harry and Elizabeth turned, focusing on the snake.

"Open," said Elizabeth but nothing happened. "Why didn't it open?"

"English, c'mon Lizzie, focus, imagine it's alive" responded Harry in an encouraging voice as he looked at his sister. "You don't need Tom to open the Chamber of Secrets, you can do it on your own. I believe in you, I know you can do it."

Elizabeth turned to the carving of the snake, focusing heavily, trying to justify Harry's faith in her. Harry looked at her; there were a lot of people counting on her to stop Tom but none more so than Harry. She looked at the snake, attempting to will it to move, trying to imagine its movement as she tried again.

"Open," stated Elizabeth forcefully but that was not what Harry heard. Rather it was a hiss and the stones clicked open, before a large, cavernous drop with the bottom just barley visible. Harry pointed his wand down, hoping that the cushioning charm that he put on the ground would have hold.

"Hang on, Lizzie," said Harry, as he tucked her other his arm, holding onto her, where he dropped down. They hit down on the ground, staggering forward, as they walked down the pathway, that was only just lit enough they could see with magical torches. Both moved forward, as they saw the Chamber. Elizabeth gave a small yelp in survive when she heard a crack and it was revealed she had stepped on large bones on the ground. They continued their walk and they moved down to a set of stone doors, with a large snake carved. Its eyes flickered and it hissed.

"Open," hissed Elizabeth in Parseltongue and the doors sprang open, before the two walked forward. After taking a few steps, they were greeted by Hermione lying on the floor, looking pale and lifeless, not moving, as the diary laid right next to them. Elizabeth's eyes

averted right past Hermione and the diary. "Alright Tom, I know you're here somewhere. Come out and show yourself."

"Very perceptive, Elizabeth," said a calm voice and a figure stepped forward. It was a boy of about sixteen or so years of age, with long black hair and a smile that one who looked a bit more closely would detect some sinister intentions beneath his charismatic exterior. "And Mr. Black, I presume."

"You presumed correctly, Riddle," said Harry in a cold voice as he looked at the image of the person who created the diary. It was faint and not that distinct at the moment, but it looked to be more solid and distinctively human as opposed to a fuzzy image.

"I wanted my reunion with Elizabeth to be alone so we can catch up but since you decided to tag along like the annoyance you are, I will deal with you shortly," responded Tom in a slight hiss, as his eyes glowed red for a second. "You know, no matter what I did, I could never gain as good of a hold on her as I would have liked, she refused to hear a word against her and it was you that caused her to throw me out the window like I was nothing. For a brief moment, I thought I would lie in the snow forgotten like yesterday's rubbish but luck shined on me when an easily manipulated mind stumbled across the diary. I played on her insecurities and her jealousy that everything came easily to Elizabeth, while she had to study every waking moment of her time, never having time for any friends. Her parents expected great things of her and she could never measure up. And she should have never expected to. She was nothing but a foolish Mudblood who didn't have any independent thought of her own besides what she read in the book."

Harry just stood there, facing Riddle, weighing his options. He wondered what would happen if he would have taken a shot at the diary, but Riddle turned slightly, to face Harry and Elizabeth as well.

"I must admit, Harry, I was wounded that my pet did not do the job properly, just missing you by a few seconds, but it got your friend, unfortunately not killing her but the fact that I got to you through her

and by wounding you, I hurt Elizabeth, I count that as a victory, even if it was not the one I wished for," stated Tom in a bored voice.

"What exactly is your pet?" asked Harry, hoping to keep Riddle talking, while he tried to figure out a plan.

"A Basilisk, the noblest of the serpents, a great beast bred by no less than Salazar Slytherin to purge the school of this filth and that's what I would have done, until Dumbledore meddled in my plans," responded Tom.

"Yes, he does have a tendency to meddle," answered Harry and Elizabeth stood right beside him, watching the back and forth between the two wizards, but Harry had subtly pulled a cloth from his robes, in an attempt to shield his eyes. Elizabeth would be safe; Parseltongues were immune to the glare of the Basilisk. He on the other hand was very vulnerable.

"I framed Hagrid, not that the oaf could have done anything, but I expect you may have already figured that out," responded Tom in a cold, indifferent voice as he looked at the two with a grin. "But the time has come for your destruction. You see, Miss Potter, I will not be beaten by you like I have in the future."

"What in the bloody hell are you talking about?" asked Elizabeth bluntly but Tom lifted his wand up, where writing appeared in the air. His name was written in crimson blood letters. "TOM MARVOLO RIDDLE" appeared in the air, before Tom calmly waved his hand and they shifted into the message of "I AM LORD VOLDEMORT". Elizabeth looked at the letters, jaw open slightly, as she looked at the message in the air above them. "You."

"Yes, me Elizabeth, the friend that you wrote to in the diary, would become the greatest Dark Lord of all time, the person you poured your heart out to, although you didn't pour your heart as much as I would have liked, you decided to confide in him, I got the sense you never totally trusted me," said Tom as he looked from Elizabeth to Harry, his expression going colder. "Because of you I could never gain a hold of her properly and because of you, my plan to get her

back was derailed, because despite my help, the Mudblood was never able to beat you in class and thus some of the impact was derailed.”

“Ah, Riddle, I’m sorry, did I hurt your feelings?” cooed Harry in a mock baby voice, but then suddenly he dove right for the diary. Riddle had saw that attack coming as the diary lit up before he bounced Harry backwards from some kind of protective measure. He turned to Harry with contempt as Harry laid on the ground, but he slipped the cloth over his eyes. He knew what came next.

“I’ll silence your tongue and your corruptive influence on my puppet forever, boy,” hissed Riddle as he turned to a large stone statue as Elizabeth watched, desperately sending a spell at Riddle but he was not corporeal enough to get hit. Riddle looked at the stature, before he began to hiss in Parseltongue. “Speak to me Salazar Slytherin, Greatest of the Hogwarts Four.”

The eyes on the statue illuminated a bright red and there was a movement within the statue.

“Kill him,” hissed Riddle and Harry could hear the slithering of a snake, before it burst out towards him. Elizabeth stared in shock, before she managed to get her wits right back at her as the snake came perilously close into sinking its fangs into Harry’s throat.

“Leave him alone!” shouted Elizabeth and the snake stopped in its tracks. Riddle looked surprised, the snake was only bred to believe the heir of Salazar Slytherin.

“Don’t listen to the girl, you are to obey me, kill the boy!” shouted Riddle and the snake moved forward, before it stalked Harry.

“Stop it, I told you to leave him alone!” countered Elizabeth in Parseltongue as Harry was knocked backwards but the snake could not finish him off.

“I’m your master, you are to do as I say, kill him, kill him now!” screamed Riddle.

“No, he’s not your real master, he’s just a shade, a memory, listen to me!” countered Elizabeth and the snake moved to the center of the room, hissing in a nearly pained manner. Its will was being pulled back and forth between two powerful forces.

“How are you doing this?” demanded Riddle.

“Perhaps the reason why I beat your future self was because I am more powerful than you,” responded Elizabeth in an attempt to get under Riddle’s skin. “And that was with many more years of experience, now you don’t really have much of a hope of beating me.”

“We’ll see” hissed Riddle before he opened his mouth. “Attack him.”

“Don’t listen to him,” countered Elizabeth and the Basilisk just turned, before it lowered itself on the ground, hissing in a pained tone. Being pulled between two powerful wills was causing its head to more or less split, causing it to be pained.

Harry removed the makeshift blindfold a half of an inch and saw Riddle standing right across from Elizabeth, with the Basilisk in the middle, its head averted downwards as if these rabid fire and contradictory commands were causing it to become insane. His eyes shifted towards a statue of Salazar Slytherin behind Riddle. Harry closed his eyes, while the summoning charm was a fourth year spell, he had practiced it a few times, but never on something this large.

“Accio statue!” shouted Harry as he pointed towards the statue and it was summoned. Riddle turned in surprise as the statue passed through his still mostly ghostly form. Despite draining most of the magic and life out of Hermione, he was still half of the where he needed to be.

“What was that supposed to accomplish, Black?” asked Riddle.

“This,” responded Harry as he released the statue and the heavy statue landed right on top of the snake with a solid crash and several loud cracks, as the impact had knocked one of the fangs out of its

mouth. The snake was unable to move, despite a pained hiss as Harry looked away from it, before he sensed no further signs of life. "I guess I killed your pet Riddle."

"Inconvenient but if you think you defeated me, you are sorely mistaken," responded Riddle and he vanished from sight as Elizabeth and Harry exchanged a look. Time ticked by as Hermione's body gave a shudder.

"THE DIARY QUICK!" shouted Harry and Elizabeth dove towards it, but she was blasted backwards and Harry quickly moved to the side, managing to catch her before she landed on the ground.

"I'm afraid that's something I can't allow," said Hermione but it was not Hermione's voice coming out of her mouth, rather it was Riddle's. Her eyes were a slit like red and she wore a sadistic, predatory smile on her face, as her wand was in hand. "I will get what I want one way or the other. AVADA KEDAVRA!"

The green light of the Killing Curse was blasted right towards Harry, but unfortunately it did not travel as quickly or was as powerful as it might have been otherwise since Riddle was using only a fraction of the power he was used to channeling. Both Elizabeth and Harry moved to the side. Elizabeth sent a stunning spell right at Hermione but Riddle used her to block it, almost like he was manipulating a puppet that could rip apart at any moment. With a flick of the wand, Elizabeth was knocked backwards, crashing into the wall.

"Not wanting to harm an innocent I see, an admirable, yet foolish quality," taunted Riddle, as Hermione's body looked about on the state of collapse, but the future Lord Voldemort forced it to work, sending a yellow light towards Harry. Harry managed to avoid the attack before he sent a cutting curse right at Hermione. Riddle was taken off guard as blood dripped from Hermione's arm. Another vicious curse that temporary took all of the air out of Hermione's lungs and caused Riddle some discomfort as well. Hermione was forced up, her face pale, each step looking like she was an eighty year old with two bad hips. Yet, the spells kept coming.

“For the Dark Lord, you don’t seem to be all that good, can’t you just hit at least one spell?” asked Harry and Riddle’s face contorted with fury, before Harry was knocked right off of his feet with another attack. Harry stood up and several loud bangs. The wand of Harry was knocked from his hands and the ropes tied around him. Once he tried to move, the ropes just seemed to get tighter. Hermione’s body slumped against the wall, but Riddle just forced it to stand up and look at Harry.

“I would not advise moving, as the more you do, the tighter the ropes go until they crush you,” responded Riddle. “Your next breath, could be your last breath.”

Elizabeth attempted to attack Riddle, but Riddle wrapped ropes around her arms and legs. He viciously yanked her up in the air. She spun around, nearly getting sick, before she thumped down to the ground with a loud crash. She rolled over, all of the air knocked out of her as Harry strained, his wand just barely out of reach and he dared not move. Riddle had Hermione raise her wand and point it towards Harry. Harry experienced the unfortunate experience of a tickling charm. He strained with every bit not to even snicker, because the slightest breath, the slightest movement, could crush him to death with these ropes, growing closer. Hermione was slumped over, breathing heavily, but her head was forced up, to look at Elizabeth.

“So, Lizzie, think you don’t need me anymore now?” taunted Riddle before he delivered a high pitched laugh. “Look at Harry, he’s about ready to get crushed to death because of your insolence. If you just would have accepted me, none of this would have happened.”

“Right, none of this would have happened, Tom,” said Elizabeth which caught Riddle off guard. “Let’s face it, you’re right, aren’t you? Without the diary, without you, I’m just a foolish little girl. You were giving me power beyond my wildest dreams and I just through it away, for what? Just because of a bunch of stupid Mudbloods got attacked. So what? You gave me great gifts and now it pained me inside. Hermione for me, that does hurt Tom, I should have realized what I had before.”

“That’s right Elizabeth, you made a mistake but I’m a forgiving sort, Hermione was inadequate in every way,” responded Riddle pleased that his time with the girl had some effect. Much like many before her, she had turned into a lovesick girl in his presence, but he was only interested in power and she did have power that he could use to ensure the world trembled before Lord Voldemort again when he returned more powerful than ever. “Together, we can do great things, just accept me once again and I’ll never leave you this time.”

Harry was about to break but suddenly, he felt the ropes vanish from around him and the tickling charm vanish. He let out a breath, his chest aching in pain but at least he had not been crushed to death. Riddle had left Hermione, judging by the fact that her body thumped to the ground, lifeless and unmoving, with blood splattering to the ground. Elizabeth stood, slumped against the wall, helpless, as Tom began to appear. She placed her thumb out discretely, pointing from the broken Basilisk fang to the diary and Harry immediately got the mention. Tom had a look of pure greed in his eyes and was distracted.

“At last we get precisely what we both deserve,” said Riddle as Harry slowly moved over, sneaking over, before he carefully picked up the Basilisk Fang, careful not to prick himself with. Riddle lifted his hand out as he looked towards Elizabeth. “Just take my hand and power will be had by those who deserve it.”

Elizabeth held out her hand, before she withdrew it and smiled before Harry had lifted up the Basilisk fang.

“Good night Voldemort,” said Harry as he stabbed the Basilisk Fang with all of the force he could. Riddle turned, before he shrieked out in absolute agony, ink spurting from the diary as Riddle contorted and moved, as he reached towards Elizabeth, he had to possess her, but he felt his hold on reality.

“You tricked me!” shrieked Riddle in a pained hiss but Elizabeth responded with a smile. “I’ll kill you both, somehow, you can’t stop me, I’ll be back!”



Riddle began to fade from reality as a large hole was melted right towards the diary and some of the Basilisk venom began melting right through the floor.

“Good thinking Lizzie, but how did you know that would work?” asked Harry.

“To be honest, I didn’t, although I hoped it would buy us some time,” answered Elizabeth as she slumped forward.

“That cut looks pretty nasty,” observed Harry in a concerned voice.

“Granger looks worse,” responded Elizabeth. “I’ll be okay, I’ve had worse.”

“I’m sure,” said Harry as he walked over to the lifeless, limp, deflated form of Hermione as he bent down. “Well she has a pulse, the lights are on but no one’s home. She’s very lucky her body didn’t just completely fall apart when Riddle possessed her not that she doesn’t have much to worry about right now given her condition.”

“My God,” breathed Elizabeth as she looked at the fallen body of Hermione. She was still breathing, but given her condition, she might have been better off that Tom killed her. “If I never would have gotten that diary...”

“Let’s not go through this Lizzie,” said Harry sternly as he looked at her. “We can play the what if game all day long but it’s happened and there’s no way to change it. All we know now is the diary is gone and it can’t harm anyone ever again.”

“The damage is already done,” said Elizabeth in a saddened voice as she looked at the diary, completely destroyed beyond all recognition because of the Basilisk fang that Harry had jammed into it. “I don’t know what would have happened if you wouldn’t have been here Harry...”

“Had you not acted quickly to distract Tom, to break his concentration, those ropes would have crushed me to death,” said

Harry as he looked up. "Now the problem is of course how do we get out of here, maybe there is a hidden stairway or a lift, or something that can get us out of here."

Suddenly a burst of flames appeared right in the Chamber of Secrets and a brilliant bird with golden feathers appeared, looking at Harry and Elizabeth, before he turned his way towards Hermione, looking at her broken body with a remorseful look in his eyes.

"Let me guess, Dumbledore sent you," said Harry and the Phoenix answered in affirmative. "He's here, despite the fact that he's been banned from the castle."

"It's almost like he suspected something was going to happen," muttered Elizabeth under her breath and Harry responded with a calm, cool, and collected nod. His sister was not far off from his own assumptions and Harry suspected that something had happened. He moved over, trying to magically secure Hermione's head as best he could, before the Phoenix transported them out of the Chamber of Secrets.

-

"Oh my!" shouted McGonagall in an absolutely mortified voice as the form of Hermione was laid on a bed in the Hospital Wing. When Poppy had called for her, she never expected this. The young girl looked absolutely broken and like she had been ravaged by some kind of dark creature. She turned to Harry and Elizabeth. "What happened?"

"We decided to go into the Chamber to figure out what was going on, since no one else apparently figured out where it was, despite some obvious clues," said Harry and McGonagall opened her mouth, a bit put off by the boldness. "Fought a Basilisk, defeated the demented teenage spirit of Lord Voldemort that was possessing Granger here, managed to get out when Dumbledore's Phoenix saved us, don't suppose everyone's favorite master manipulator is lurking around?"

“Now, Mr. Black, I don’t think you should be saying such things about the Hogwarts Headmaster,” said McGonagall, but this was only to do her job, and Elizabeth prepared to open her mouth, to admit her dealings with the diary as well but found her voice to be inaudible. Harry gave her a shadow of a warning look. She quickly adapted a neutral expression on her face.

“Last time I checked he wasn’t our Headmaster given the fact he was suspended and I bet the Hogwarts Board of Governors won’t be too happy to find out he’s in the school when they gave him express orders not to,” said Harry. “Nevertheless, is he here?”

“Yes, Mr. Black, he’s here, I will escort them and check back with Poppy before I tell Miss Granger’s parents...the unfortunate news,” said McGonagall who had a shaky voice as they walked outside, Harry having the now dormant diary under his arm.

-

“Miss Potter, Mr. Black, I’m pleased to see that you’re here,” said Dumbledore with a twinkle in his eyes.

“Now, I’m no expert, Dumbledore, but I believe this is a highly dark magic artifact,” said Harry as he tossed the diary with a bit of disgust right in front of Dumbledore. Dumbledore took the diary and began to look at it, before he nodded in affirmative.

“You would be correct, Harry, a few basic scans have detected a Dark Compulsion spell and I daresay that if I work further, I can find some more out,” said Dumbledore.

“Then let me bring you up to speed, this diary was possessing Hermione Granger, into setting the monster of Slytherin, a Basilisk on innocent students, she’s currently in the Hospital Wing, it’s unlikely she will ever be the same, if she even recovers,” said Harry who was working up a good head of steam as he looked Dumbledore right in the eye, the twinkle fading. “The owner, as we found out when we fought his spirit, which was leeching magic and life off of Granger,

was Tom Marvolo Riddle. I think we all know and loathe him as Lord Voldemort.”

Dumbledore responded with a nod but the lack of surprise on his face had told Harry what he needed to know. That was the old man had figured out everything a long time ago and Elizabeth bit her lip, Harry grabbed her hand.

“I regret what happened but there have been no deaths and I’m certain Miss Granger will be making a full recovery from this ordeal,” said Dumbledore.

“You wouldn’t be saying that if you saw her, perhaps you should take a trip to the Hospital Wing to check on her,” said Harry. “Let’s just say that I’ve seen Prisoners of War who looked better off than Granger was.”

Footsteps approached the office and the door opened, to reveal the face of Lucius Malfoy entering the office, with a foul expression on his face and Dobby was following, trying to shine his master’s shoes, as Lucius turned to Dumbledore with an irritated voice.

“I decided to come to the school, thinking just because some Muggleborn girl was taken into the Chamber of Secrets, that you decided you would take it upon yourself to get involved,” said Lucius as he looked at Dumbledore. “Even though you have been put on probation, you decided to take it upon yourself to insert yourself into the situation of Hogwarts.”

“I think the true measure of the man is that he does what he’s supposed to do, not necessary what he is allowed to do,” said Dumbledore and Elizabeth felt sickened at these words, as far as she was concerned; they painted Dumbledore in a complete and utter hypocrite. “I would think that the Board of Governors would be pleased to know who the culprit was.”

“Very well, who is it?” asked Lucius and before Dumbledore could even begin to answer, Harry decided to answer for the soon to be

disgraced ex-Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

“The same Muggleborn girl who was brought in the Chamber of Secrets by writing in this diary, that possessed her and forced her to released the monster of Slytherin, a Basilisk, that petrified several students, three of them pureblood I might add, and then Elizabeth and I had to go down into the Chamber and fight the culprit, the teenaged version of He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named, because no other teachers were willing to do anything,” said Harry nearly in one breath, casting a triumphant look towards Dumbledore, who returned a look that indicated he was disappointed at Harry. “You would have thought that the Headmaster would have figured out a dark artifact was taken into his school, but I’m sure he had his reasons for not taking a closer look.”

“Yes, I’m sure he did have reasons for doing that, one might think that considering the number of fingers pointed towards Miss Potter, it was a deliberate attempt to discredit her and force her to be sent back to her Muggle relations but that will be for the Board of Governors to decide,” said Lucius, who looked like Christmas had come early and brought all of the holidays along for the ride. While he intended to use the diary to murder the Potter girl, to be honest, permanently sabotaging Dumbledore’s reputation was a pretty decent consolation prize. How the diary got to the Mudblood, Lucius could care less but it did offer another additional bonus, discrediting their kind as well, especially with the pureblood attacks. “Naturally, I will have to remove this diary for investigation and proper disposal, it could be rather dangerous, but I know some contacts that will ensure it will be properly disposed of. As for you Albus...well I’m afraid this is the end for you. The Board of Governors will not give you a job as Filch’s assistant at the rate this evidence is cropping up against you.”

“It is always the darkest before the dawn, Lucius,” said Dumbledore in a calm voice as he could not help but notice Dobby trying to frantically get the attention of Elizabeth but the girl was paying the house elf no mind, obvious disdaining the creature for some reason that Dumbledore could not even begin to guess.

“Perhaps, Albus, perhaps, but I would get a good look at this office, because the next time you’re going to see it is when you die and become a portrait,” answered Lucius calmly as he kept his eyes on Dumbledore. “You have until tomorrow to vacate the school, when I return. If you’re still here, I call the Aurors and I’m sure the Minister may arrange for you to spend some quality time with the Dementors. Understand?”

“Yes, Lucius,” said Dumbledore who made a mental note to talk to the Board of Governors. Surely, there must be something going on and Lucius left, with Dobby casting one more hopeful look towards Elizabeth but Lucius pulled the house elf out by his ears, with the diary in his hand. “Elizabeth, could you please leave? I would like to speak with Harry for a few moments.”

Elizabeth opened her mouth to protest but Harry shook his head and she left. Dumbledore looked at Harry as if he was disappointed.

“Why, Harry?” asked Dumbledore.

“I warned you Dumbledore, if you tried and get Elizabeth sent back there one more time, I would ruin your reputation and the Hogwarts Headmaster position is only the beginning, when word gets out, I hear the Leaky Cauldron might be hiring but they do have certain stands,” said Harry as he looked at Dumbledore.

“Look Harry, you need to convince Elizabeth to...” said Dumbledore.

“Return to the Dursleys for a few weeks,” interrupted Harry as he could not contain his absolute disgust. Just when he thought Dumbledore could not sink lower, he found a new depth. “You have some nerve even considering that for the briefest moment. Elizabeth will be safe and I intend to tell her everything.”

“Harry, you promised me you would never reveal that you her, she needs to trust me,” argued Dumbledore, nearly begging for Harry not to let the cat out of the bag about them being siblings.

“She doesn’t already and she never will, I decided a long time ago that it’s something I had to tell her and I don’t owe you anything Dumbledore, your little games got our parents killed to begin with and how many other people died because of you?” asked Harry. “Point being that you will be nothing within a matter of weeks and everyone will know why. Another point is that I hate you for what you did to my sister and if you were on fire, I wouldn’t even spit in your direction. Now if you excuse me, I’m leaving.”

“Harry, I need you to...” said Dumbledore but Harry ignored him. It was difficult to pinpoint the exact time where his plans went right to hell. He had maneuvered himself out of some tight spots in his day but this was the tightest yet. He knew no easy way out and this could be the end.

-

Harry was standing outside of the Hospital Wing a day later, at the end of the exams. The Mandrake Restorative Draft was nearly done, Luna and Draco were already in the Hospital Wing, with Harry waiting out in the hallway, for Elizabeth who should be on her way soon. He reflected to the Daily Prophet articles that more or less hinted that Dumbledore had tried to frame Elizabeth to put her back under his control. Rita Skeeter was having a field day, now painting Elizabeth as some kind of heroic martyr, an about face from what occurred earlier in the year.

Lockhart was gone, rumor had it that he fled from the school after having been elected by the staff to go into the Chamber of Secrets and he had been subsequently sacked by McGonagall for “not following orders”. It was almost like she was looking for an excuse to get rid of Lockhart. While several witches were depressed, they would get over it when the next famous person came around.

“Hi, Harry, have they been revived yet?” asked Elizabeth as she walked up towards Harry, having just packed up her things after the last exam had been completed. They would leave for the summer tomorrow.

“No, it should be ready any minute,” said Harry as he looked in the Hospital Wing, Madam Pomfrey was still mixing up the draught. “Lizzie, I need to talk to you about something, something that we kind of got interrupted last time when we found out they were petrified.”

“Yes, I forgot about that until you brought it up,” said Elizabeth calmly.

“Well Lizzie, I know you think your only family are the Dursleys, by blood of course, I would disown that lot once I had the chance,” said Harry and she responded with a nod. “Well your parents weren’t the only people who everything thinks were killed by Voldemort. They don’t really publicize this in the new books but they say your brother, your twin brother, was killed as well.”

“You can’t be serious,” said Elizabeth in an astonished, she had not heard of this before, of course most accounts of the Potter death were vague, only saying that Elizabeth was the only survivor. “He’s dead though, so it really doesn’t matter, does it?”

“It does, because he’s not dead, Dumbledore faked his death as part of his plan,” said Harry.

“How do you know all this?” demanded Elizabeth.

“Because I’m your twin brother,” said Harry quickly before he lost his nerve and the next sound that was heard was a solid crack echoing throughout the hallway.

And I think we’ll end the chapter on that note. A bit more at Hogwarts as we go into the Summer and then transition into Year Three, with all sorts of fun and games on the way.



## Chapter Seventeen: Freedom

Before Harry could even take a breath after those words had left his mouth, he felt Elizabeth's fist impact his face. He was caught completely off guard, his sister packed a pretty damn good punch for someone her size. He clutched the side of face, as she stood right across from him, glaring at him, almost lost for words as her fists were clenched together. Harry rubbed his face, thankfully he was not bleeding, but he still had enough pain, blues, and agony. He decided not to tempt fate by responding right now but Elizabeth took a deep breath, obviously trying to calm herself down before she did something they regretted.

Judging by the fact that all of the windows in the hallway they were standing had shattered, sending glass flying to the outside, Harry suspected her attempts to calm her temper was not able to work. She took a step back, looking at Harry.

"You...you...you...YOU KNEW!" screamed Elizabeth and Harry was glad for his idea to put silencing charms all of the doorways on this hallway, especially the Hospital Wing. "For two years...you knew me and you didn't tell me...you let me think they were the only family I had...those monsters...I never even...how...no...."

Elizabeth threw her hands up into the air and held her breath, as if she was counting to ten to calm herself down.

"How long did you know?" asked Elizabeth in a deadly voice, staring down Harry, with an icy stare in her emerald green eyes.

"Since I was seven and the moment I knew, I tried everything to get you, I suspected that something was off," said Harry in a defensive voice, who decided now might not be the best idea to tell her that Dumbledore had made her promise. Elizabeth just stood, arms folded, eyes narrowed. Harry was almost ready for round two with the Basilisk judging by the look she was giving him. "Dumbledore..."

"I DON'T CARE YOU COULD HAVE TOLD ME!" shouted Elizabeth as she glared at Harry, before taking another deep calming breath.

“Of course, no one could tell the more little fragile girl anything. No, don’t tell Lizzie anything, because she might not be able to take it because she’s mentally unstable and evil because she’s a Parseltongue. That’s right, don’t tell me a thing, because I might not be able to handle it. For two years, you could have told me and you just decided to tell me now.”

Harry just stared back, he refused to get into a shouting match with her.

“I did it because it seemed like the right thing to do, it would have just brought you more stuff that you didn’t need at the time...” said Harry but Elizabeth just looked back at him.

“Save your little explanations, I trusted you, but it’s obvious I can’t trust anyone,” said Elizabeth in a positively venomous voice. “So, I’ll see you at home, brother.”

This last word was laced with so much venom, that Harry almost thought it would be coming from the Basilisk, if he did not know better. He moved forward to stop her.

“Lizzie, listen....” said Harry as he placed his hand on her shoulder but she slapped it away.

“Save it you lying coward!” shouted Elizabeth, who had completely lost her temper right now. “I HATE YOU AND I NEVER WANT TO SPEAK TO YOU EVER AGAIN!”

Elizabeth turned her back and stomped off, leaving Harry standing in the hallway, looking after her, wondering how this was going go so horribly wrong. The year was to end in a few days and things were going to get very awkward in the Black household come the summertime. Harry decided to see how things were going in the Hospital Wing, more of a way to occupy his mind. Madam Pomfrey was busy, when he entered the Hospital Wing and Draco and Luna were waiting for Harry.

“Ah, Harry, here just in time,” said Draco with a nod. “The Draught is just being completed, soon they will be all woke up, a shame with Creevey really, but at least Ginny will be awake finally.”

“Yes, that would be nice,” said Harry, who would be glad for something good to come out of today, even though he could see Ginny telling him that she told him so in his mind’s eye, as he winced, rubbing underneath his eye, feeling the preliminary signs of swelling.

“That’s a nasty shiner you have Harry,” commented Luna casually.

“Oh, it’s nothing, just a shiner,” said Harry dismissively. “Bumped into something, no big deal really, I’ll surprise.”

“You bumped into something?” asked Draco skeptically. “What, did you bump into someone’s fist?”

Harry just responded to Draco with a slight glare, before he turned his attention, watching Ginny, her face looking like it was carved out of stone. Soon, she would be awake and Harry needed someone to talk to, because he just was not ready to let Luna and Draco in on the secret just yet. They would know in due time. He hoped his sister would calm down in time but she seemed rather mad at him. He moved over to the side of bed, where Madam Pomfrey had just reached Ginny. She did not question why he was here, as Luna and Draco stepped forward, as Pomfrey gently tipped the Mandrake Draught into her mouth. A spell worked her throat muscles to swallow it. Ginny’s eyes flickered open as she showed signs of life, before she looked irritated.

“That stuff tastes terrible,” said Ginny as she pulled a face, obviously in disgust, as her senses slowly returned to her. “Remind me to never get myself petrified again.”

She turned to Harry, looking at him with a smile. She figured he would be right by her side when she woke up and Draco and Luna also looked at her. Luna smiled at her but Harry leaned forward and grabbed her in a warm hug.

“I thought for a second...but at least you’re okay,” said Harry as Ginny smiled at Harry, before she returned the hug.

“Of course, I’m okay Harry, you’re not going to get rid of me that easily,” said Ginny with a smirk, as the hug went on for a few more seconds, before Luna politely cleared her throat, but at the same time, Draco decided to speak out as only he can.

“Oh, don’t mind us, we’ll stand here, just waiting for you to finish your greeting,” said Draco and Harry and Ginny quickly broke away from the hug, cheeks slightly reddening, as Ginny slowly turned to Draco, a frown appearing on her face.

“Prat,” muttered Ginny but Draco just smirked, as her arms were folded.

“I think we can speak for everyone when we’re glad that you’re okay, Ginny,” said Luna with a smile as she turned to Draco. “Even Draco was worried when he saw the state you were in...”

“Not so loud, Lovegood, you’ll ruin my reputation,” said Draco before he had a triumphant smirk. “Although I don’t think anyone was as worried as Harry, he looked like he wanted to kill whoever was behind this...”

“You know, Draco, I already had to take care of one Slytherin who decided he didn’t really know when it was best for him to shut up, I wouldn’t want to make it two for two,” said Harry in a soft voice that made Draco recoil and Ginny look at him curiously, but he looked at her calmly. “I’ll explain to you later, when we’re out of the hospital, it’s a long story, and one that I don’t think anyone should have to overhear.”

“Along with the story of what happened to your eye, I assume,” said Ginny, but she had a shrewd idea what happened. Of course, she was not going to say anything yet but she would find out soon enough.

“Apparently he ran into something,” said Draco in a patronizing voice as he looked from Ginny to Luna, before checking the time.

“Now that I know you’ve recovered Ginny, I really need to get going. Maintain appearances, even though I think my father finally accepts at least one of you. I don’t know what you did Harry, but he’s written two letters, mentioning how much of a brilliant, cunning mind you have and how I should take a leaf out of your book. I don’t suppose what my dear old Father could be talking about.”

“Haven’t had the slightest idea,” said Harry, who felt slightly dirty because of Lucius praising him. He did not do what he did for Lucius, but to make sure Dumbledore got a humbling reality check that he could not play with people’s lives at will. Besides, while he could not prove Lucius had slipped Elizabeth the diary, he was confident that he was right.

“Of course you don’t, Harry,” said Draco with a knowing smile. His father rarely gave out praise so he knew that Harry had to do something extraordinarily underhanded to get his notice. “Well, I’ll see you soon enough, Harry, Ginny, and Luna.”

Draco retreated, barely allowing his friends enough time to say their good byes, as Padma and Lisa had just woke up from their petrification and this caused Ginny to notice someone was not there.

“Where’s Elizabeth?” asked Ginny curiously and Harry just paused for a second, before he shrugged his shoulders, causing his friend to look at him with a slightly raised eyebrow and as Luna was off, looking out the window in a bit of an absent minded.

“Ravenclaw Common Room, I think, she might be running a bit late,” said Harry, loud enough for the other two girls to hear him and they walked off. Ginny looked at Harry, a perplexed expression etched on her face. “I’ll explain later.”

Ginny nodded, she had a pretty good idea what happened but she wanted to hear it from Harry first, along with anything else that happened when she was out for the count.

“I trusted him,” hissed Elizabeth in Parseltongue as she entered the Ravenclaw Common Room, before she threw the Lockhart book against the wall angrily and stormed up to her empty dormitory. For two years, Harry could have told her the truth but he decided to not tell her anything. In fact, until Harry mentioned it, Elizabeth did not have the slightest hint that she had other family members. For too long, she thought those things that she was forced to live with was the only people. She kicked her trunk, causing it to slam against the wall and threw herself down on the bed, staring at the ceiling, wondering how Harry could lie to her. True, he looked out for her and she should have known something was up, but still, he could have pulled her aside and told her. Everyone in her life had lied to her. The Dursleys had told her parents had died in a car crash, when that was a lie. Everyone in her life had told her that they would check up on her real complaints of the Dursleys mistreating her and they never did. She looked up at the ceiling, looking at a framed picture that was taken at Christmas, the first Christmas she ever really remembered enjoying, her and Harry sitting right by the Christmas tree. She saw her eleven year old self, smiling and waving, but she angrily threw the picture frame against the window, it crashed, as she looked at the ceiling.

“Liz, are you up here?” asked Lisa in a concerned voice.

“Lisa? Padma?” asked Elizabeth in a surprised voice, the truth was that she was glad that they were okay, but at the same time, she could not enjoy it as much as she would have liked. “I see the cure worked.”

“Yeah, but we don’t remember anything that happened when we were out,” said Padma. “We weren’t even back there when everyone was talking about how you and Harry beat a Basilisk that was controlled about Hermione Granger. I can’t believe she was a Parseltongue and people are saying that she framed you out of jealousy.”

“There’s something that we don’t know, is there?” asked Lisa.

“Yes, but I don’t want to talk about it now,” said Elizabeth as she buried her face in her pillow. “I’m glad you two are fine, really, but I’m just not feeling well right now, I’ll talk to you soon...I swear...”

She heard words of encouragement and hopes she would feel better but she did not know if she would ever feel better ever again. The one person she thought she could trust had kept a very big secret from her. Time would only tell and right now, all Elizabeth wanted was to be left alone with her thoughts.

-

In the latter part of the day, after curfew, two figures entered an abandoned corridor. Harry walked inside, with Ginny following closely behind him.

“Okay, Harry, what’s the deal,” said Ginny as she looked at Harry, an encouraging smile on her face and Harry took a deep breath, before he looked back at his friend.

“I told Lizzie that I was her brother,” said Harry and Ginny looked at him with a smile.

“Really Harry, that’s great, it’s about time you told her the truth,” responded Ginny happily but Harry just frowned at her.

“Not great, she didn’t take the news all well,” responded Harry and as a result, Ginny looked at him, encouraging him to go on. “Well, not taking it too well would be an understatement, given the fact that she blew up and blew out several windows as well. Then she yelled at me, saying some things that I’d rather not think about it and she said...she said she hated me and she never wanted to speak to me again.”

Ginny bit her lip before she began laughing. Harry was taking aback, wondering what amused her about this grave situation.

“And might I ask what’s so funny about all of this?” asked Harry and Ginny laughed for about another minute, before she managed to

catch her breath and look at Harry, with a smile on her face, as if she was glad she knew something that Harry did not for once.

“Well, Harry, here’s the thing, if I had a Galleon for every time I told one my brothers I hated them and never wanted to speak to them again...well, let’s just say that I would make the Malfoys look about as poor as my family is right now,” said Ginny as she looked at Harry with what she hoped would be a reassuring expression. “Don’t worry, Harry, Elizabeth is...well I’m sure she’s rather upset about the fact you kept that from her for almost two years. Give her time to cool down, of course it might take a bit longer than normal because of this thing is a bit bigger than any argument I’ve ever gotten into.”

“If you say so Ginny,” responded Harry in a deflated voice. “I know what I should have done...”

“You should have told her sooner, like I had suggested,” answered Ginny calmly and Harry just looked at her, irritated look. “You can give me that look all you want, but it doesn’t change the fact that I was right all along.”

“I suppose so,” answered Harry calmly, as he looked at her. “Maybe if I just...”

“Talking to her this soon will make it worse,” said Ginny knowingly. “It will sound like a feeble apology and only serve to get you hexed into a wall.”

“Speaking from experience, aren’t we?” asked Harry and Ginny just responded with a knowing smile, but Harry felt he had some thinking to do. The fact that Elizabeth would be under the same roof with him all summer would prove to be a challenge. Truth be told, Harry was thrilled that his sister would never have to be with the Dursleys for another moment of her life, but the fact was after this little blowup, Harry was dreading being under the same house. He just hoped everything got smoothed over in time and for the first time, really regretted letting Dumbledore dictate insisting that he never told Elizabeth about their relationship. It was one of the mistakes that Harry felt would haunt him for quite some time.



-

The year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, ended and Elizabeth just walked off, having said her goodbyes to Lisa and Padma, having spent the entire ride in the carriage not saying more than a few words at time. In fact, ever since her blow up with Harry, she had barely said anything to anyone. She had gone out of her way to avoid anyone, whenever possible, making sure to show up for meals in the last couple of days only towards the end with a few people. She heard praise in the hallway, which only just served to blacken her already darkened mood. These were the same people who decided to crucify her for having a magical ability that was associated with dark wizards. She was glad that she would not have to be in the hallways of Hogwarts. The education was good and the few friends she had, it was almost worth it, but the two faced hypocrites that influenced the Wizarding World had caused her to become sour on most of it rather quickly. She was already jaded because of her time at the Dursleys.

Speaking of two faced hypocrites, she saw her twin brother and his family, which was now her family, at least temporarily and would be in a matter of days. Andromeda looked at her with a smile and Elizabeth walked over, with Harry becoming very interested in a bird at that moment.

“Hello Elizabeth, glad to see you could make it,” said Andromeda. “The adoption process should go through in a few days and you will be officially a member of a family.”

“ That’s great Andromeda,” said Elizabeth as she looked at Nymphadora, who was looking curiously from Harry to Elizabeth and the fact they were avoiding each other. “Looking forward to it, really am, it should be interesting.”

“That’s great,” said Andromeda, who did not miss the stiff interaction between her son and his twin sister. He had to have told her and she took it badly. She had avoided encouraging Harry to tell her the truth, out of a misguided promise to Dumbledore that she regretted once

she found out what the poor girl went through at the Dursleys. She produced a Portkey and the group grabbed onto it, before it pulled them to their home.

-

“Ah Draco, the results of your examinations have arrived,” said Lucius a couple of days after the year at Hogwarts had ended as he sat down at the kitchen table with his son and wife on either side. Lucius opened up the envelope and looked through the piece of parchment inside, with interest, without even bothering to even allow Draco a chance to look at them. He looked at the marks and Draco’s ranking in the year, with mild interest. “Acceptable, if you’re willing to not make anything out of yourself for life and third place for your year, not up to the standards you should aspire to.”

“I improved from last year, remember, I was ranked fourth?” said Draco and Lucius just surveyed his heir, before he responded with a calm nod.

“Indeed, Draco, I remember, you’re only behind Harry and young Miss Potter, with the sudden and rather unfortunate accident that the Granger girl,” said Lucius in mock remorse, as he remembered hearing that the girl had been moved to St. Mungos, where she might never recover, remaining in a vegetative state, until at least her parents could no longer afford the treatments to keep her alive. “Being any place other than first always means that there is someone better than you.”

“Yes, father,” said Draco in a calm voice, it was best not to argue with in these situations. “I understand perfectly and I will aspire to do better next year.”

“That is all I ask of you Draco,” responded Lucius, who resolved to let the matter drop, for the moment, but he would not let his son disgrace the legacy of the Honorable House of Malfoy but there were other important matters that Lucius felt he needed to play a part in. “Now, I understand you will be celebrating your thirteenth birthday within the next week, Draco. A milestone in your life, you’re no longer

a child and you're going to take the steps you need in becoming the wizard you will grow into. So, I have taken it upon myself to arrange invitations for your friends, isn't that right, Narcissa?"

"Yes, Lucius, we've invited all of your friends, Gregory, Vincent, Pansy, all of them," said Narcissa kindly.

"And don't forget, Harry," responded Lucius as Narcissa did a double take at that name.

"Harry?" asked Narcissa.

"Yes, Harry, you know as in Harry Black, Andromeda's son, our nephew," stated Lucius as he looked at his wife and Narcissa looked back.

"I thought you said..." stated Narcissa but Lucius shook his head.

"You might have misunderstood me, I believe Harry and any guest of his choosing should be invited to the party," responded Lucius as he looked at Narcissa that plainly said "send him an invitation, I'll explain why once Draco is not in the room". Lucius cleared his throat. "I'm sure Harry will enjoy having mingling with the future members of the next generation of magical society. You've told me he is a great young man who has a lot of potential and ambitions."

"Yes, I did," said Draco, who once again wondered what Harry did to garner such attention. Especially since Lucius had looked upon Harry, along with Ginny and Luna, with disdain and not being worth his time.

"I wish to get to know the boy better myself," said Lucius, who resolved to get to know Harry quite well. He was of course at a pivotal stage of his life, and needed a strong male influence in his life. Lucius resolved to give him the guidance he needed to put him in the right direction, the boy might come in handy together, given the flash of brilliance he showed in Dumbledore's office, basically giving Lucius the reason to remove him from Hogwarts for good.

“Right, Lucius, if you insist, I’ll send an invitation right away,” said Narcissa, as she had met the boy a few times, in passing and found him to be polite and rather intelligent, a sense of sophistication that few purebloods even had. Still, she wondered about her husband’s sudden interest in the boy was. She resolved to find out all too soon, as Lucius rarely did something without having some motive behind it.

-

Other than some uneasiness around Harry, Elizabeth enjoyed the first three days of her summer more than she ever enjoyed any time she ever spent with the Dursleys. It was nice to be able to sleep in for a change, not having to get up and do back breaking chores for hours on end, in the backbreaking sun. She was also free to wander the house as she pleased, although she did spend a great deal of time in her room, completing the homework that was assigned and reading a few books she had picked up from owl order. She had planned on taking Arithmancy, Study of Ancient Runes, and Care of Magical Creatures as her elective classes. Divination was a useless subject and seen as a joke in Ravenclaw, a class that only Gryffindors, Hufflepuffs, and a few Slytherins took as an easy option. Muggle Studies did not seem like a class that would benefit her that much at all either, given the fact that she was raised another. She also made many notes on several potions that were assigned during third year, using her mother’s diary and a few other reference books, to draw her own conclusions on what to improve.

As for Harry, they spoke briefly and coolly. Elizabeth still felt a bit of pain towards what Harry did, keeping the fact that they were twins. She did not tell Andromeda or Nymphadora of her troubles, even though she suspected they knew. It was just something that no one wanted to say the first word of. She slightly regretted blowing up at Harry, the truth was her emotions were high after Riddle tampering with her mind a good part of the year and then the battle of the Chamber. What happened to Granger could have happened to her, it was painfully obvious. She did nothing to confirm and deny the rumors that were going around the school when she left, because she felt the most people would have their own opinions regardless of the facts or lack thereof. One of those unfortunate facts was that people

who despise Muggleborns would always do so and they would gratefully accept the excuse.

In the fact, the best things to come out of this situation was that she had no more Dursleys and Dumbledore had been disgraced, even though it looked like Muggleborn sentiment was at an all time low for certain people, not that it was all that good among those groups to begin with.

A knock on her door had brought her out of her thoughts.

“What is it?” asked Elizabeth in a curious voice.

“Elizabeth, its Andromeda,” said Andromeda from outside of the door. “I just got a letter from Gringotts, they told me the adoption process will be finalized a week from today, you’ll be a member of the Black family legally.”

“That’s great, glad to hear that it’s finally going to be done,” said Elizabeth with a smile, glad that she would have a family, legally, even though she always had one with Harry. Once again, it pained her and she wondered if she overreacted but she shook her head. He needed to apologize to her; it was his fault that he never told her that they were siblings.

“Dinner will be ready in an hour,” answered Andromeda as an afterthought, almost like she wanted to say something else but thought better of it.

“ Thanks,” answered Elizabeth, as she returned to her notes, keeping an eye on the clock, with a bit of dread. She had a lot on her mind right now, thinking that she should write to her friends, who had sent her two letters a piece but she had been putting it off out of some misguided guilt of bringing the diary into the school and getting them petrified.

-

Lucius Malfoy sat down, a confident look on his face, but worry appeared in his mind. It was now time for a necessary task, as it was time for the yearly meeting of the Council of Blood Purity. Several pairs of eyes focused on Lucius, he remembered their last meeting, where he had been assigned with the task of taking care of Elizabeth Potter. Not only that mission failed, even though there were successes in other areas like ruining Dumbledore and the reputation of Mudbloods, it failed to eliminate the girl. Not only that, but the Wizengamot, despite Lucius's many connections, by the barest of margins, voted to remove the girl from her Muggle relatives. Several eyes appeared on Lucius, even his allies on the Council, Crabbe and Goyle, looked to be distancing themselves from Lucius. Goldstein looked at Lucius, a smug look on the Pureblood noble's face, as he sensed a bit of fear. He had it out for Malfoy for years, always wanting to maneuver him out of the Council, so he could grab a bit more power than he already have.

"Well Lucius, it has been too long, I hope I don't have to remind you of the task you were trusted with during our previous meeting," remarked Goldstein. "But some people might not remember that you were given the task of dealing with the Potter girl. With her thinking beyond what was acceptable, she was becoming a danger and a threat to our world. Yet, not only is she still alive, but she's more popular than ever thanks to saving Hogwarts from closing and she has been removed from her Muggle relations."

"Now, all is not lost, with the Granger girl setting the Basilisk on the students, the Mudbloods have lost stature and Dumbledore has been removed as Hogwarts Headmaster, with more of his positions of power being stripped," said Lucius. "At the rate he's going, he'll be lucky to be on the Chocolate Frog Cards by the end of the summer."

"Lucius, while this may be the case, Dumbledore is not a disruptive revolutionary like the Potter girl is," remarked Goldstein as he looked at Lucius. "True, he is slight meddlesome annoyance and not a proper pureblood, but he does not rock the boat, changing the way things should be in our world."

“As for the Mudblood, they are improper as usual, no matter what happened, we may be able to sway a few wizards to the proper side of thinking, but it doesn’t really matter in the long run,” said a member of the council as he looked at Lucius. “They should not be of your concern Lucius, one would think you were going soft, giving Mudbloods more credit for how effective they are than you should. Given the Ministry is polluted with blood traitors these days, I wouldn’t be surprised if you had been swayed to the wrong side.”

“That’s where you’re wrong, Evers, I’m the same as I always have been, devote to our cause,” said Lucius calmly, as if there should have been no argument but Goldstein just responded with a snort and Nott decided to cut in.

“Yes, devoted, to the cause of stepping over pureblood families and thinking that throwing your gold around means you’ve worked hard to gain influence,” commented Nott. “It’s not about blood purity, it’s always been about the Malfoy family name.”

“Well if that isn’t like the cauldron calling the goblet black,” commented Lucius lightly but Nott just looked at him, before he turned to Goldstein.

“We have been in discussion before you decided to arrive, because of a meeting you had with the Minister of Magic, if I’m not mistaken, who is not as pureblood as any of the Council members in this room,” said Nott. “You put your business with throwing around your influence in the Ministry beyond with ensuring the continuation of blood purity. Therefore, as a senior member of the Council of Blood Purity, I bring about the suggestion that Lucius Malfoy’s status in the Council is suspended, pending an investigation on every aspect of his life, including his family tree. If he is proven to be of purer blood than eighty five percent of the Council members, he will be admitted back in. If not, he will be expelled and Malfoys will forever be branded blood traitors.”

“You fools don’t know what you’re doing,” hissed Lucius through his teeth.

“I believe we will put this matter to a vote, all hands in the air,” said Goldstein and most, if not all other than Lucius, lifted. Some were rather reluctant but once they realized the majority was about to vote for Lucius’s status to be suspended and did not want to have their bloodlines looked into, for some unfortunate little flaw.

“Motion passed by majority,” commented Goldstein. “Good day to you Lucius, I suspect we’ll be in touch once our investigation has been completed.”

“I’m certain,” said Lucius, who clenched his fist over his walking stick, they had felt too threatened by his status of being a close advisor to the Ministry of Magic and wanted to take him down a peg. The failure of his elimination of the Potter girl was just one part. The Council would not see the last of Lucius on his day and they would regret what they have done, one way or another.

-

“High security prisoner ward down this way, gives you the creeps, doesn’t it?” asked Dawlish, who was guarding one of the new Auror recruits, a young man by the name of Travis down the hall.

“Yes, Dementors lurking around every corner, freezes up every bit of your insides,” commented Travis and Dawlish responded with a nod.

“Yeah, but they’re necessary, with some of the guests down this corridor,” responded Dawlish. “Including some of the most dangerous followers of He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named, responsible for countless deaths, like this one right here. She killed countless and tortured two of the departments best Aurors into insanity.”

“Her?” asked Travis in a skeptical voice as he looked at a woman, with lifeless black hair who sat cross legged in her cell, without blinking, humming in an uneven manner. Her face was completely ravaged by the years in the high security wing of Azkaban.



“Bellatrix Lestrange, a nasty piece of work, she was, not that her husband and brother in law were all that pleasant either,” remarked Dawlish. “She was insane before she was sent to Azkaban and now...well I guess you’ve seen the results.”

“Lights are on but no one’s home,” said Travis as he took a step, absent mindedly sticking his hand right by the bars of the cell, as Dawlish just nodded. “Harmless as a little girl right now.”

“Yeah, Azkaban has taken much of the fight out of her, being in a cell for over eleven years can do that to a person,” agreed Dawlish, but suddenly a hand gripped Travis and yanked him backwards into the cell. The back of his head smashed with a crash against the iron bars. Dawlish turned, in surprise, but was repelled against the wall, with a thud, blood splattering against the wall when his skull split open. Travis dropped down in pain as the cell door swung open.

Bellatrix Lestrange slowly walked out of the cell, with a smile appearing on her face, showing a few discolored teeth, as she flicked her hair backwards, a maggot dropping to the ground. She looked down at the carnage with a venomous look in her eyes, as she held the wand once belonging to Travis.

“The fight’s taken out of me, hardly, Azkaban does make people insane but the problem is this,” said Bellatrix, before she dropped her voice to a nearly inaudible whisper. “I’m already insane.”

Bellatrix looked down at the Aurors, but the air around her filled with mists and the Dementors were on her rounds. Fortunately, she could move quickly, having taken out two Aurors with her own wits, without even using a wand.

The Dementors glided to her but Bellatrix flicked her hand and blasted a hole through the wall.

“Sorry, guys, it’s been fun, but I’ve got to split, places to go, things to do, people to kill,” said Bellatrix to the Dementors, as she blew them a kiss, before giggling under her breath. She had a whole list of

people who she planned on shortening their lives, including the person who was responsible for the death of her master.

Tucking her head, Bellatrix held her stolen wand, before she did a cannonball from Azkaban, launching herself into the icy waters below.

And we end the chapter on that note. One more chapter to close out the summer and go into the third year, which should be eventful, at least I hope it will be. Including but not limiting to Harry and Elizabeth having a discussion about certain matters.

## Chapter Eighteen: Birthdays and Blood.

“Harry, you must be kidding, you actually got an invitation to Draco’s party,” said Ginny in surprise over the Floo.

“That’s what the card says, Harry Black and guest,” replied Harry with a frown. “It just goes nicely with that theory that Lucius is showing an intriguing amount of interest in someone who had barely had anything to do with before. That wasn’t really my intention in Dumbledore’s office...”

“I don’t know Harry, I mean, I’m sure Draco would be delighted for you to be there, someone other than the alleged acceptable friends his father has chosen for him,” commented Ginny and Harry responded with a nod. “At the same time, would this have happened if you had not helped Lucius, even if it was indirectly? Mum and Dad were disheartened when Dumbledore was put out of the Headmaster’s office, but they thought it was something that people like Lucius was going to try for years.”

“Yes, but his contact with Elizabeth had to be limited as much as possible, with him in place at school, he could do things to subtly influence how well she does,” said Harry cynically. “She’s still not talking to me, I figure sooner or later we’re going to have to sit down and talk...”

“Give it a bit of time Harry, there’s no need in avoiding it, but forcing the issue will just be as bad,” answered Ginny and Harry turned to his friend, nodding, wishing he had taken her advice in telling Elizabeth when they had first met. Now he had a headache to deal with and more wounds to mend than he cared. “The party is tomorrow isn’t it?”

“Yes, I was wondering if you would like to come with me,” said Harry and Ginny looked surprised, raising an eyebrow. “For the record, I thought about asking her to come as my guest, as a way to try to mend the fences, but I’m not sure if she’s ready being around that level of pureblood manipulation. Not that she won’t be able to recognize it when it happens.”

“Yes, her temper, well it can be worse than mine,” admitted Ginny. “I’ll tell Mum that I went over to Luna’s, but the fact that she’s out of town with her father, is something that I’m going to omit.”

“Your mother has never checked up on you all those years, still,” said Harry in an amused voice.

“No, I’m her innocent little girl, who could do no wrong,” answered Ginny with a smile. “And adult’s think us children are the naïve one’s”

Harry snickered at this.

“Okay, Ginny, I’ll see you soon enough, talk to you later,” responded Harry.

“Okay, bye Harry, talk to you later,” answered Ginny, as her face faded from the Floo Network.

-

Vernon Dursley had been in a foul mood as of late. He had been passed over for a promotion; in fact he had been demoted for to a lower paying job. He had half of the mind to quit Grunnings, to show them that he was a valuable asset. Petunia had been in a foul mood as of late, mostly because of the neighbors talking about the girl not returning home from schooling. The girl might be gone but her presence was fixing to haunt the Dursleys for quite some time. His son’s life was ruined because of having the freaky taint of magic and it pained Vernon to even think that world. He was forced to attend Hogwarts, where he was kicked out after a year, but that also met that he had to attend a public school. Everything appeared to snowball into more problems, as he slammed the door shut, after another day at a dead end job, for a supervisor who was the boss’s nephew and thus stumbled around everything, but Vernon still had to listen to despite having seniority.

Still, at least things could not get any worse.

At least not yet.

“PETUNIA!” shouted Vernon, but right away, he knew something was off. His wife was usually there to greet him with the latest gossip. While he did not like it, he learned to put up with it. It was one of the things that had to be learned to survive married life. Still, Petunia was not anywhere around and Vernon decided to try his luck. “PETUNIA!”

“Sorry, she can’t come, I’m afraid she’s tied up at the moment,” said a raspy voice and Vernon responded, his first instinct was to call the police, because some nutcase had broken into his house. The moment he touched the phone, he found himself lifted off of his feet, and he was blasted backwards. Vernon winced, as his hand was burned to a crisp and a figure moved in the shadows. “I knew you would try that, you Muggles always try to use those telephones when I come calling, and I always get pleasure in blasting them away from it. Every single time, it never really gets hold.”

The figure cackled as Vernon got up, clenching his fists.

“WHO ARE YOU?” demanded Vernon. “You’re breaking and entering, I won’t stand for this...”

“Not standing, that’s a great idea,” said the voice from the shadows, and Vernon gave a bellow of pain, as every bone in his legs appeared to snap, as he thumped to the ground. He tried to get up, but he found himself unable to move.

“You’re...one of them, one of the freaks,” grunted Vernon through his pain and there was slow but loud clapping coming from the shadows.

“Bravo, it appears you may in fact be above pond scum on the evolutionary scale,” commented the voice as Vernon looked up.

“Show yourself!” commanded Vernon, despite the pain, but he resolved to face this freak and find out what they did to his wife.

“Your funeral, Dursley,” said the voice and the figure stepped out of the shadows. She was a woman, with dark black hair and black rings

underneath her eyes, with a crazed expression etched in her eyes. She stared at Vernon, not blinking, not even once, as her mouth contorted into a crooked grin. "Bellatrix Lestrange, at your service."

"I don't care what your name is, but the girl has left and thank God for that!" shouted Vernon and Bellatrix just nodded, with a smirk, as she rolled her eyes.

"I'm here to punish you in a way that the fools of the Ministry of Magic don't have the balls to," commented Bellatrix. "I've already taken care of your wife and now I'm going to make you pay for your crimes against the Wizarding World and humanity in general."

"I DID NOTHING WRONG!" shouted Vernon in a loud voice. "The girl...she was forced on us...you have to understand...Dumbledore threatened us..."

"Perhaps he did, Dumbledore is a bastard," agreed Bellatrix nonchalantly. "But, still doesn't excuse your actions against an heiress of an old and respected pureblood family, treating her in the way you did, I've picked up things in prison, Aurors tend to talk a lot when you're catatonic. You Muggles have gotten a disturbing depth that even I would not have even believed, attacking your own blood. Granted, I did put a scorpion in Sirius's bed one time and it almost killed him, but that was purely self defense I assure you."

Vernon looked at the woman, words failing him as much as intelligence had a long time ago. Bellatrix stood in front of Vernon, waiting for a response.

"Guess you finally decided it wasn't a good idea to talk back to someone who is going to massacre you," remarked Bellatrix in a serious voice and Vernon just whimpered. "It will be quick and painless...aw who in the hell am I kidding, even I can't buy that shit. It will be painful and drawn out with much disembowelment involved. Just think, Vernon, you could have avoided this had you showed something human decency."

"You won't get away with this," said Vernon in a low voice.

“I will, because even though the Ministry doesn’t have the guts to...well gut you like a fish for what you did, it doesn’t mean they give a damn whether you live or die, Dumbledore might care, because he’s still clinging on to some hope that he could send the little savior back to the place where he can control her, even though we might be roommates if I ever get sent back to Azkaban,” whispered Bellatrix as she licked her lips, seeing the fear in Vernon’s eyes, especially considering she was freaked out by the fact that she was not blinking. “See, even the Dark Lord would even be appalled with what I’m going to do to you...”

“The Dark Lord?” asked Vernon before his face contorted in painful recognition. “The one that was after the freak and her parents....”

“I see Dumbledore told you secrets about the Wizarding World, I’ll kill him later, must make a note of that in your blood after I kill you,” remarked Bellatrix. “Yes, I suppose he would have told you about my Master...”

“But if the freak was responsible for his downfall, then why do you want to take some revenge on us for getting exactly what she deserved?” asked Vernon.

“NO WITCH OR WIZARD DESERVES TO BE ABUSED BY A FILTHY MUGGLE LIKE YOURSELF!” shrieked Bellatrix angrily, causing Vernon to recoil in horror, as much as his restraints would allow him. “As for being responsible for his downfall, what makes you so sure?”

“Dumbledore explained in his letter, in fact, he told us to keep her down to earth,” said Vernon.

“I see,” responded Bellatrix crisply, as she faced Vernon “We all know Dumbledore is a filthy manipulative liar anyway.”

Vernon did not have time to clarify, mostly because Bellatrix had gotten bored with her little game. She turned to Vernon, as he looked up, seeing a slashing movement made from her hand. A mild purple

light sliced into the throat of Vernon, true she could have put more power into it, but that would have made it too sudden. She wanted Vernon to suffer, as blood splattered out of his throat. Petunia had already gotten hers, a bloody brutal demise. Vernon sat there, she could see the pain in his eyes.

Vernon attempted to yell out in pain but his throat was too damaged. Somehow, not being able to vocalize his pain had made it that much more intense. He saw the cackling woman, the crazed expression in her eyes, the joy she had at her pain. In his dying moments, Vernon felt immense hatred towards the girl, she had brought it on them with her freakish nature and her unnaturalness, he hoped she got herself blown up like her parents did.

“Looks like Dudley is coming home, perhaps Auntie Bella should say hi,” said Bellatrix, a sadistic grin appearing on her face. The boy was a product of his parents; ignorance but still, that did not mean he could be spared. She could not allow this family to reproduce, in fact, she remembered hearing Vernon had a sister, something she would take care of when she was done having her fun with young Dudley Dursley. The fact that thing was allowed into Hogwarts, even for a year, made her all that much more sickened and disturbed. She did some horrifying things in her service to the Dark Lord, but Dumbledore was giving her a disturbing run for her money.

-

Elizabeth Potter was sitting in the Gringotts bank, with her soon to be adoptive mother Andromeda Tonks, in a chamber. Several goblins were moving around. As much as Andromeda did her, it would be a scaled down version of the adoption ritual that Harry had underwent, as the magic would have damaging effects on an older witch or wizard. Still, while the properties of her blood would not be changed, she would be legally placed in the Black family and Andromeda mentioned something about a twin bond of some sort between her and Harry becoming easier to be reestablished. While she had no idea exactly everything with this bond entitled, the couple of references she found hinted that the twins might be able to talk to each other through their minds. Which made a bit of sense to



Elizabeth, after all this did explain why Fred and George Weasley often finished each other's sentences.

It reminded her that she really did need to talk to Harry, right now he was at Draco's birthday party. She was beginning to regret losing her temper and she found herself sympathizing with Harry's side just a little bit, even though she still disagreed with it.

A very surly looking goblin entered the room. Actually, when compared to most goblins he was fairly indifferent and when he saw who he was dealing with, his expression became rather neutral, which Elizabeth figured was the closest thing to a happy look that was going to be directed towards a human. While she got this treatment because she was the Girl-Who-Lived or because of the gold in her vaults, it was difficult to say and she was not going to ask. Something told her that it leaned more towards the gold, as that was the universal language of goblins.

"Miss Potter," responded the goblin. "You're here to undergo the adoption procedure to put you as a member of the Black family. Please note that while you will be in the Black family, you will also remain the heiress to the Potter fortune and will be entitled to all gold and properties, until the moment you pass. You will be fourth in line to be the head of the Black family, behind Andromeda Black, Harry Black, and Narcissa Malfoy. This is more or less a magically enforced Muggle adoption, as opposed to the blood adoption that is used at times, as we at Gringotts look after the safety of our valued customers and feel that the blood adoption is too dangerous to use for older witches and wizards. Is all of this understood?"

"Yes," responded Elizabeth firmly and another goblin entered, an older goblin, with more than a few scars and a slight limp. It was clear this one had been through more than one battle during his time.

"This is Karak, our expert on human magic, before the adoption ritual can take place, you must be examined for any charms or curses placed on your person," said the goblin as Karak held up a staff.

“Sit still and relax Miss Potter, this will be over before you could even blink,” said Karak in a stiff voice and Elizabeth did her best to remain still, as the goblin did his job.

In a matter of seconds, the staff turned to a deep, dark shade of black and Karak was taken off guard. Andromeda looked surprised at this and wondered what it meant, but Karak would save her the trouble in asking.

“Were you aware Miss Potter had a Horcrux embedded in her forehead?” asked Karak and Elizabeth looked confused, but Andromeda looked horrified. The elder goblin turned to Elizabeth to give her an explanation. “A Horcrux is considered by humans to be the darkest of the dark magic, the foulest of the foul, its even taboo to mention the word in books even discussing the defense of dark magic. It occurs when a wizard splits his soul through the act of murder and encases a piece of it in an object, to gain a crude form of immortality but with physical drawbacks.”

“So this was Dumbledore’s proof that she was the one?” asked Andromeda and the goblins just nodded, it made sense. “What happens if the Horcrux remains...”

“The girl will be driven to madness,” said Karak casually. “Given everything said, we believe it happened when the Killing Curse backfired on the defeat of Lord Voldemort and part of his soul absorbed into her.”

Elizabeth felt violently ill at the thought of having a part of that monster inside of her. It explained why Tom was so obsessed with her, another part of him to join forces with, buried deep with her. She wondered why Dumbledore would send her back to the Dursleys, knowing what was buried inside her.

“Is there any way to remove it?” asked Elizabeth in desperation as Karak looked at her, as if considering something for a few seconds, before the goblin responded with a calm nod, as he looked at the girl seriously.

“Yes, we goblins know much about eliminating Horcruxes, more than the wizards ever will know but removing one from a living breathing person is a bit of a complex branch of magic, but thankfully our methods are sophisticated enough to work,” said Karak after a bit of thought. “Now, the human way of doing it is simple and quite frankly crude. Throwing the Killing Curse at the person with the Horcrux inside, which does work to an extent, that much I’ll give the person who came up with this theory. The problem was, the person will also die.”

Karak paused, allowing him and the other goblin a few seconds to enjoy the horror on the faces of both Andromeda and Elizabeth, before he decided to continue.

“Fortunately, our way is a bit less lethal, although I think as you’ll find out that it does have a great deal of pain, but I think you’ll agree in the end that the results will be most acceptable to complete and utter madness later on,” said Karak. “For a small fee, we can take you to a chamber, where the dark and corruptive elements within the Horcrux are removed...”

“What about the entire Horcrux?” asked Andromeda.

“It is much easier just to remove the pieces that cause the damage and allow for the immortality, but I assure you all Miss Potter will retain are certain magical gifts inherited from Lord Voldemort and a patchwork of memories that make no sense to her, but will not be obvious most of the time, other than perhaps an odd burst of inspiration,” said Karak. “Rest assure this must be done before the adoption ritual can take place, otherwise it could have disastrous side effects.”

“Do it, I don’t care how much it will cost, I’ll pay for it,” said Elizabeth, not wanting to have a part of Lord Voldemort in her any longer than she had her. As for the pain, she worried little about it, she was more than used to pain.

“Are you sure Elizabeth?” asked Andromeda tentatively.

“It’s something that has to be done, I don’t want to live with this in me if it can be removed,” said Elizabeth and Andromeda nodded, as the goblins awaited for the information.

“Two hundred Galleons for the procedure,” responded Karak, answering the unasked question. “There is no time like the present Miss Potter, so we should begin right away.”

Elizabeth nodded, feeling like a weight would be lifted right off of her shoulders in a matter of moments. It was just another thing that Dumbledore neglected to inform her of, she doubted this was over. It was far from it but at least the Horcrux would be removed. After that, she would go from there.

-

Ginny and Harry arrived outside of Malfoy Manor. They had never been there in their life, but they had heard the stories that Draco had told them. They walked inside, where barely a fifth of the people there were around their own age. Most of them were Ministry of Magic officials by the looks of things.

“Leave it to Lucius to use his son’s birthday party as a smokescreen to gain more influence,” muttered Ginny and Harry nodded in agreement, as the two walked in. There was a small group of Slytherins, all giving Ginny odd looks and given the status of her family in most circles, this was to be expected. They spotted Draco a little bit, sitting with Pansy, Crabbe, and Goyle, as Pansy chatted with a small group of girls, all of them giggling for some reason. Something about their giggling unnerved Harry slightly.

“Ah, there you are Harry,” said Lucius Malfoy in a bright voice, as he turned away from a toad face woman who Harry did not know, but he was pretty sure he would not like if he did and he saw a brief flicker of darkness approach on Lucius face when he saw Ginny but he quickly hid it with a bright smile. “And Miss Weasley, intriguing to have you here at this day of celebration, in fact myself and your father go back quite a ways.”

“I’m sure you do, Mr. Malfoy,” said Ginny in a polite voice, but she did not trust him one bit and judging by the look on Harry’s face, he did not either, but they were willing to play along to see what this was all about.

“Why don’t you take a seat over there, Miss Weasley, while Harry and I have a little walk and I introduce him to some people who are introduced to meeting him,” said Lucius calmly, in a tone that left no room for argument. Harry looked at Draco, who looked like he would want to stick his head in the cauldron of a potion made by Crabbe or Goyle than be a part of this fiasco. Still, he followed Lucius, who was silent for a few seconds. “Looks like everyone who received an invitation showed up, except for the Minister of Magic who has a rather full schedule this time of year and Albus Dumbledore.”

“Dumbledore?” asked Harry in shock.

“An act of good faith, to prove there are no hard feelings for what he did, it was just a matter of him being ill equipped to manage a school of students, not anything malicious on his part, but, I think he doesn’t really have the best interests of our children in mind,” responded Lucius calmly. “I wanted to extend to Dumbledore that he is still a vital part of our world, even though he was removed from the post as Hogwarts Headmaster and has been suspended from the Wizengamot, pending further investigation.”

Harry just responded with a nod, he just wanted to get Dumbledore away from Elizabeth but leave it for someone like Lucius to run with the ball all the way to the end. Still, he let Lucius lead him in whatever direction, as he heard hints dropped that Harry should start a career at the Ministry when he left Hogwarts and Lucius could push him in the right direction, if Harry was willing to put in the effort. Never mind the fact that he was not even thirteen himself, Lucius had given this a great deal of thought, more than Harry would plan to for several years.

-

Dobby sat upstairs, just punishing himself for failing his master once again. He had tried to help Elizabeth Potter but he had only made

things worse and now the Girl-Who-Lived had hated it. It was just as his master told him, he was nothing but a filthy, pathetic, creature that was not even worthy to lick the slime off the lowest of creatures.

Suddenly Dobby felt himself lift up the air and was struggling, coming face to face with someone who he had not seen in many, many years.

“Miss Bellatrix, Dobby was believing that she was still being in Azkaban,” responded Dobby as he struggled.

“And Bellatrix be believing that Dobby better do what she says or Bellatrix will torture Dobby within a inch of his life and go another foot,” said Bellatrix in a mocking tone of voice, as the house elf struggled, but Bellatrix refused to let go of him. “You are to deliver your Master Lucius a nice little message from me.”

“What is it Miss Bellatrix,” said Dobby.

“Tell Lucius that someone is calling for him in the study Floo and that it’s urgent, they won’t take no for an answer and don’t mention anything other than that, don’t even hint that it’s me, or else, I’ll carve you like a Christmas goose,” said Bellatrix in a crazed tone of voice, before she added in an almost sweet, innocent tone. “Can you do that Dobby?”

“Yes, miss, Dobby be telling Master Lucius right away,” gasped the house elf as Bellatrix roughly dropped the house elf. She always hated the filthy things anyway, so to make it squirm caused her a great deal of pleasure.

“Good,” said Bellatrix as she slinked into the study, ready to eliminate an unfortunate cancer eating away at the Wizarding World. Countless would thank her later for the selfless heroic actions she was about to undertake. Vernon and Petunia Dursley and their wretched son had their status of living revoked and now she felt it was time to move one step up the evolutionary ladder.

Harry managed to excuse himself, as Lucius was busy talking to some high ranking Ministry officials about matters that quite frankly did not concern him.

“Finally, Pansy decided to give me a bit of space,” grumbled Draco as he walked over. “She does have her good points, on occasion, but she does do a good job in concealing them from the world.”

“She conceals them pretty well,” commented Ginny as she walked over. This party was more boring than anything she had attended her life. The only thing that made her feel better was she did not have it as bad as Harry did, being dragged around to meet a great number of boring and quite stuffy Ministry officials. “This party...”

“Dismal and quite dull, don’t worry, it’s the same way every year, it’s only marginally improved by the fact you two are here,” said Draco, as every year it had worked. He had opened his presents before the alleged party, mostly including books on magical law and customs, something that had been drilled into his head since birth and dress robes. His father’s wisdom and not so subtle hints that he should be working harder to create connections he could use for the future. About the only gift that Draco remembered he could enjoy with the Nimbus 2001 that he got last year and that was only because his father had managed to purchase his way onto the Slytherin Quidditch team, not that he needed it. “It looks like my father intends to suck you into that wonderful world of pureblood excitement, something happened up in that office with Dumbledore that impressed him...”

“Was not my intention,” said Harry.

“Figured as much, but Father will find a use for you, only if it benefits him, although I do think that he may be a little less harder on you, given that he’s not counting on you to uphold the legacy of the Malfoy bloodline,” said Draco as he looked at Harry and Ginny. “Although I was quite amused at his reaction when Ginny showed up, he was struggling beyond his might not to have a brain aneurysm.”

“Glad to be of service,” said Ginny, as she turned to Harry, as the party, if one could call it that, given the stiff nature of many of the

guests, as several of the other children looked like they were forced to be there by their parents before she looked over her shoulder. "Harry and I better get out of your way, as it looks like Pansy's coming soon. Besides, I need to be back from Luna's within the next hour anyway."

"Yeah, I promised I would be home soon as well, hope you have a happy birthday Draco," responded Harry.

"That's an oxymoron if I've ever heard one, with this party," grumbled Draco as he watched his friends walk off, before he returned to suffer through the remainder of his birthday. All it amounted to him was one less year that his father would accept excuses for his lack of making influential connections, not that he had been all that accepting since his second year had been completed.

-

Lucius watched Harry leave with a smirk on his face. He hoped he had planted a seed of interest in the boy's mind, he could no longer rely on Draco to extend his power through the Ministry of Magic. Mostly because of the boy's own lack of success in making himself look like the most important student in his year, but also because of the Council of Blood Purity's investigation on him for his failure to eliminate the Girl-Who-Lived. They would dig up something on him, no matter how loosely or how slightly fabricated that would ruin him and by extension the Malfoy family name. She watched Narcissa in conversation, he had not told his wife this, it was something she did not need to know.

"Master Lucius," said Dobby in a terrified voice as Lucius turned to the house elf. "Master, there is a call up for you in your study, sir."

"Tell them that I can't come, you foolish elf," stated Lucius stiffly but Dobby winced.

"Master, they are saying it is urgent, they have to speak with you right away, please, Master, it's not Dobby's fault, Dobby is just passing the message," said Dobby in an apologetic voice and Lucius



looked at his servant for a few seconds, before his face contorted into a scowl and he nodded coldly, causing Dobby to back up in fear.

“This had better be important as you say Dobby or you will be punished,” said Lucius coldly and Dobby just nodded. He closed his eyes, hoping that Bellatrix would not hurt his master too much, otherwise, he would be punished for leading his master into something dangerous.

-

Bellatrix waited in the shadows as Lucius opened the study doors. Lucius walked in, a look of confusion on his face, before the door slammed shut on him. Lucius turned around but seconds later, his wand was knocked out of his hand and a blink of an eye after that, he was wrapped in thick cables, where he struggled to breath. He looked up and saw the face of Bellatrix Lestrange, who had a sadistic expression on her face, looking at Lucius with murderous intentions in her eyes.

“Bellatrix, you’re supposed to be in Azkaban,” gasped Lucius.

“Funny, that appears to be a running theme,” said Bellatrix.

“What are you doing here?” demanded Lucius.

“I’m here to make you pay for your betrayal of the Dark Lord,” said Bellatrix, as she licked her lips, almost tasting Lucius’s blood. “I’ve already avenged one injustice and now I’m here to do one more for the day. Claiming you’re under the Imperius Curse, when you know well the dark mark is taken willingly, and some of the things I saw you do, no one could be that creative when under the Imperius Curse. You used the Dark Lord as your own personal vessel to get a bit more power, never believing in his vision for a second. Because of that, you’ll die.”

“Bellatrix, you must understand I was...blackmailed into saying that I was under the Imperius Curse,” stammered Lucius, a cunning plan forming in his mind.

“Blackmailed?” asked Bellatrix curiously. She was aware that Lucius may be lying to save his own skin, but she was intrigued nevertheless.

“Yes, a group of pureblood wizards, they conspired against the Dark Lord, they felt threatened by him for some reason, I don’t know, but they needed my power and influence, they had information, I don’t know if it was real, but I had no choice, they said it could hurt me and my entire family,” said Lucius. “As you can see, I had no choice.”

“Yes, Lucius, you might not have, but if you’re lying, you will die a slow and agonizing death,” responded Bellatrix coldly as she looked at her brother in law with contempt. “I’ll need names of those who seek to keep the master from rising again, they go on the list of those who will die.”

“I can do you one better, I can give you a list, names and addresses of each and every witch and wizard part of this group, it’s in that drawer over there,” said Lucius, moving his head and Bellatrix walked forward, before she opened the drawer, pulling out a roll of parchment, before she nodded.

“Is this it?” asked Bellatrix.

“Yes, I swear on the legacy of the Dark Lord this is it,” remarked Lucius, as Bellatrix had the list of the entire membership of the Council of Blood Purity in her hands.

“So much traitorous scum to kill, all these former Death Eaters on this list, disgusting,” said Bellatrix as she turned to Lucius. “Congratulations Lucius, you’ll be allowed to live for today.”

“How about untying me?” asked Lucius but Bellatrix responded by cackling.

“Don’t insult my intelligence, I need insurance you won’t call the Ministry, but don’t worry, those ropes will vanish in ten minutes, long enough to allow me plenty of time to clear the area, but remember, breath a word of our little meeting to anyone, and I’ll be back,” said

Bellatrix in a sadistic tone. "All of the names on this list will be eradicated, until I reach the end and then I will take care of the one that caused the demise of the Dark Lord."

Bellatrix was gone and Lucius just smiled, despite his predicament. With any luck, Bellatrix would eliminate the vast majority of the Council of Blood Purity and Elizabeth Potter as well, thus making his plans to extend his influence much easier.

Dobby would be paying for this humiliation however.

-

Harry walked into the sitting room, where he came face to face with his sister, who looked slightly pale for some reason, but actually relieved as if something happened to her. Both of the twins stared at each other for a brief second.

"We need to talk," said both Harry and Elizabeth simultaneously and they looked at each other.

"Okay, let's sit down, I figured this was coming sooner or later," said Harry, who felt a bit awkward, as Elizabeth nodded, before they each sat on the couch next to each other.

"Why didn't you tell me when we first met?" asked Elizabeth, who felt she was not angry at Harry anymore, just severely annoyed that he kept that and hurt as well. Once the Horcrux had been removed, most of her anger faded, but she guessed she might have blew up at Harry anyway. It was a shock to her at any rate.

"You know, Lizzie, I should have, I admit it now, I made a mistake," commented Harry carefully, knowing his sister's temper. "It's just yet...Dumbledore...well let's face it, he intended to keep you at the Dursleys until he became of age...nothing gave him that right, but he was being backed up by the Ministry, at least enough people in high positions of power. You might get your hopes up that you would be leaving them and I would too. In fact, until Vernon forced the issue with his little blowup last summer, I almost gave up hope."

“Well thankfully that happened, although maybe not, because Vernon’s fist connecting with my face hurt,” said Elizabeth with a weak smile. “Still, Harry, you hurt me, by keeping that, it’s almost like you didn’t trust me. I would have trusted you with it had our roles been reversed.”

“For what it’s worth, I’m really sorry I kept it from you, but it was mostly because I didn’t want to get any hopes up and because I was a bit afraid of how you would react, perhaps I should have, but I didn’t and...” stated Harry. “I just wanted to protect you at all costs Lizzie. I wish I was the one, not because of any of the fame, but because I can see how much it hurts you to be judged by your fame and not because of who you are, which is a shame. It is also a shame your ability to live a normal life is ruined and I’m...”

“That was Dumbledore’s fault, you’re only guilty about not telling me soon enough, out of fear of what might happened, truly I would have been annoyed that I wasn’t told, but I might not have blown up at you to the extent I had,” said Elizabeth.

“Yeah, well I know not to get you mad again, that punch hurt,” said Harry, which caused Elizabeth to laugh.

“I actually knocked out Dudley one time, out of anger, he was annoying me so much, I’m guessing it was a punch combined with accidental magic, his gang left me alone for about a week, didn’t matter, as I spent the week in my cupboard after Vernon yelled himself hoarse,” said Elizabeth before she quickly continued, as if this did not bother her, she would never see the Dursleys again. “As for wanting to be the one, I don’t want it either, but I would certainly not want what happened to me to happen to anyone else.”

Elizabeth thought about telling Harry about the Horcrux in her head that had to be removed but she yawned. It was getting late and it would take much too long to explain. Besides, there would be plenty of time to tell him later.

“So, now what?” asked Harry.

“I forgive you Harry, it still hurts that you didn’t trust me, but I’m getting over it, really,” said Elizabeth. “There isn’t anything else you’re keeping from me is there?”

“Not to my knowledge,” said Harry, as he racked his brain, he had told Elizabeth everything he could remember that she needed to know. “It’s getting late...”

“Yeah, we better get to bed,” commented Elizabeth, as she felt better after having to talk to Harry and was glad she heard him out from his perspective. “Good night Harry.”

“Good night, Lizzie, see you in the morning,” said Harry, as he reached forward and hugged her. She flinched briefly when he touched her, but she relaxed and returned it, before both twins parted their separate ways to go to bed.

-

Andromeda was busy completely breakfast, the children would wake up at any moment, when the owl with the Daily Prophet swooped through the opening window. She held a plate and walked over, spotting the headline out of the corner of her eye, before the plate slipped from her hands and dropped to the floor, as she looked at the paper in shock and horror.

Bellatrix Lestrange Escapes From Azkaban, Killing Two Aurors, Girl-Who-Lived Believed To Be Prime Target.

## Chapter Nineteen: Dementors on a Train:

Andromeda stared at the paper for several moments in numb shock, unable to move. Quite frankly, she struggled to read beyond the headline, as it told her all she needed to know. Bellatrix had escaped Azkaban, how it was still being investigated and she had immediately went to Number Four Privet Drive, where the Dursleys, all three of them, had been slaughtered. The paper went onto speculate that Bellatrix had been going after the Girl-Who-Lived and did not care who suffered in her bloodlust. That was all Andromeda needed to read, as she folded up the paper, before she sank into a chair, to gain her composure, but she was rattled. Naturally she wondered how best to break the news to her children, they would find out, but she was having trouble wrapping her head around the entire situation as well. Bellatrix was a danger, and while the only person the article speculated she was going after was Elizabeth, Andromeda knew better. It had never been proven, but she was nearly certain that Bellatrix had murdered Ted all of those years ago. Had she not been out taking Nymphadora to St. Mungos to get the girl checked out because of a mysterious illness, which turned out to be the growing of her Metamorphmagus talents, they would have been murdered as well. It was a matter of luck, if she could call it that. That was a couple of months before the fall of Lord Voldemort.

Now she was out again and Andromeda was hard pressed for answers. The fact remained that Bellatrix's crimes, even if she did not torture the Longbottoms, should have been enough to be given the Dementor's Kiss, but for some reason that did not happen and Andromeda suspected some strings were pulled somewhere, by Narcissa, who had always sympathized with Bellatrix, even as she became more withdrawn as she poured herself into the dark arts, twisting her mind even more. She always made excuses when they were children, Bellatrix had always been a bit violent and had injured several Muggle children for stealing her doll when she was six. It had only gotten worse from there, but Narcissa continued to make excuses for Bellatrix. Andromeda loved her sister, but she was past the point of getting help, she was completely out of her mind and absolutely dangerous.

At least she could sleep easy with Bellatrix in Azkaban, but until the moment she was back safely in Azkaban, Andromeda would not be able to sleep. Her children would be in danger. Just when Elizabeth was settling in and about to live a normal life or at least as normal as this world would allow, then this happened. She had signed the Hogsmeade permission forms, but she was having second thoughts about allowing both Elizabeth and Harry into Hogsmeade. She knew if they really wanted to go, and she forbid it, they would still find a way in, no matter what she said to them. They were the children of James Potter after all and Lily could be equally sneaky when she wanted to be.

“Mum, is everything alright, I heard a crash not too long ago?” asked Nymphadora with a yawn, as she pushed open the door, before she entered the kitchen. Harry followed, shortly by Elizabeth, as they entered the kitchen.

“Just reading the Daily Prophet today and I’ve got some distressing news,” reported Andromeda grimly, as the three sat down. “Bellatrix has escaped from Azkaban.”

“How, no one has ever done that before?” gasped Nymphadora but she stopped, this all made sense. “They were talking about a security breach and how it was important to correct it before word got out to the press yesterday, this had to be it, right?”

“I’m afraid word did get it out,” said Andromeda gravely, before she took a deep breath. “Elizabeth, this might be speculation on the Prophet’s part, but given the fact that she was one of the top followers of You-Know-Who, it’s likely she’s out to kill you.”

“I’m guessing this is not just speculation, there was something to go about this, not just idle speculation because of my fame,” responded Elizabeth coolly.

“Yes, I’m afraid so, she made one attempt on your life, it is a good thing she’s not keeping up on current events, but she maimed the Dursleys,” said Andromeda. “The Ministry believes, and this might

just be common sense, she was looking for you when she killed them.”

“She attacked the Dursleys, then,” said Elizabeth in an indifferent voice, as she looked out the window. They were dead, she could not say she would miss them, but she was fully intent on having them live their lives without her in it despite what happened with them in the past but then her mood darkened. “Dumbledore was lying, he said I was safe there, and then this happens, if Dumbledore would have gotten his way...”

“We can play the what if game all we want, but it is an angle that the media will be running with, given all the anti-Dumbledore publicity as of late,” said Andromeda. “That’s not the point, the point is that Bellatrix is dangerous and until she gets locked into Azkaban, I’m not going to sleep safely. The protective spells around this house should be enough to keep her at bay until you two return to Hogwarts but...”

“Hogsmeade, we understand,” stated Harry in a calm voice as Elizabeth opened her mouth in confusion but Harry shook his head.

“I wasn’t going to forbid you officially, but if you can just stay inside the castle, where you should in theory be protected,” stated Andromeda and she saw Elizabeth with a dubious expression on her face. “Yes, I know, the last two years, you’ve been put in danger, but with Dumbledore out of the picture, threats won’t be ignored as much as they were, at least I hope they won’t be.”

“Don’t worry, everything will be fine, Lizzie,” offered Harry. “If the Aurors have any clue on where Bellatrix are, they’re capture her in no time at all.”

“As someone who works in that department, I’m not exactly all that filled with hope,” commented Nymphadora grimly, as Harry shrugged, before they got back to their breakfast. Harry had only heard tales about what Bellatrix and other fanatical Death Eaters did. He really did hope that she would be captured, because he could tell that Elizabeth was really looking forward to visiting Hogsmeade and so was he.



-

“Lucius, I trust you are well,” stated Cornelius Fudge, as Lucius sat down in the Minister’s office, on that very morning.

“As well as can be expected with the grave news we all just received through the Daily Prophet,” said Lucius.

“Yes, well, you can understand why I didn’t want this to get out, the public would panic if a murderous lunatic like Lestrangle was on the loose,” stated Fudge in a nervous voice.

“I support your position on the matter, Cornelius, it is never prudent to tell the public any more than they need to know,” stated Lucius calmly as he looked at the Minister, sensing an opportunity that he could exploit. “Are we certain Lestrangle is after Miss Potter?”

“There’s no other way about it, Lucius, she attacked the house of her Muggle relatives, obviously a bit behind on her current events, and slaughtered them in cold blood, it was horrible what she did to the Dursley boy, I saw the pictures, and...well I suspect nightmares will be looming for me in the future,” said Fudge darkly.

“The safety that Dumbledore had insisted was in the house was in error then,” responded Lucius calmly.

“I’m afraid Dumbledore was much mistaken than, the girl had been targeted and there was nothing to stop Lestrangle from slaughtering her relatives like animals,” stated Fudge in a nervous voice. “I don’t know where Dumbledore’s priorities are as of late, he’s been odd, after the fall of You-Know-Who...”

“Perhaps a forced retirement from the Wizengamot and public life will do Dumbledore some good, if he’s losing his grip,” suggested Lucius smoothly and Fudge just looked at Lucius for a few seconds, before he responded with a nod. “It is a good thing that he has already been removed as the Hogwarts Headmaster, he does not have the interests of our children in mind anymore.”

Fudge just nodded, not knowing what to say. He felt that Dumbledore was perhaps over pushing his bounds at times, but overall had the best interests of all in mind. Still, as Minister, Fudge had to protect innocents from dangerous influences and given Dumbledore's misfire with the Girl-Who-Lived situation, it became all too apparent to Fudge that Dumbledore had to have his power reduced.

"Bellatrix will make a move for Hogwarts, as bold as it may seem, but with Dumbledore out of the picture, she might think she would have a chance," continued Lucius. "I think there is more information that you've received that you've been concealing from the public."

"Given it will be out by tomorrow morning, I don't see the harm of information you Lucius," said Fudge calmly. "Bellatrix attacked the heads of three high ranking pureblood families. The Auror Department is looking into it, but it's said that Raymond Bulstrode, Phillip Goldstein, and Daniel Montague have all been killed."

"A tragedy all of them, all fine and respected members of the Wizarding community," said Lucius with false remorse, they were three card carrying members of the Council of Blood Purity. Bellatrix took pride in her work, despite her insanity and she worked fast at the task at hand. "I do wonder why she would go after purebloods..."

"A mystery to both of us, I'm afraid she's fully cracked," stated Fudge grimly as he turned to Lucius. "Now there is the matter of securing Hogwarts, the Wizengamot is going to vote on this matter, but I think the best practice would be to allow Dementors onto the grounds of Hogwarts."

"Dementors, an intriguing step," responded Lucius in a pleased voice, he was going to suggest them to Fudge, but now that the Minister had brought them up, it would save him a sales pitch. "And one that should be taken, it might be uncomfortable to some, but as long as the Dementors are not allowed in the school, to interfere in the classes, then there should be no problems, Minister."

“Absolutely, the plan is to have them patrol Hogsmeade and have them stationed at every entrance,” said Fudge calmly. “McGonagall doesn’t seem too pleased, but she’s coming around to our way of thinking. It’s for the safety of all students and as long as they don’t go out of bounds, there should be no problem.”

“No, Minister, there should not be,” said Lucius. “The Dementors may be able to capture Bellatrix, but considering she has escaped once, then she can and will escape again and that means only one thing must be done, Minister and I think you’re agree.”

“The Kiss?” asked Fudge in confusion. “Lucius, I assumed...”

“Your assumption might have held water at another time, but times have changed and now I’m under the impression that Bellatrix has to be stopped for her own good, as Azkaban won’t contain her any longer, no matter how good the security is around the prison,” stated Lucius, as he looked at Fudge seriously. Bellatrix would need to be stopped at all costs and she would trip up sooner or later and would get kissed. Hopefully not before she wiped out the Council of Blood Purity and the Girl-Who-Lived before she was taken down once and for all. “I trust you will do what is right, Minister, but there is just one more thing that I must ask of you, before I make my monthly charity donation.”

“And that is Lucius?” asked Fudge.

“No one is to know that I gave you the suggestion to sign off on the order for Bellatrix to receive the Dementor’s Kiss, should you take that move,” stated Lucius calmly and Fudge looked at him.

“Of course Lucius, the suggestion will be made to the Wizengamot, I think they will agree, considering the danger that Bellatrix Lestrange poses to us all, given her recent attacks,” said Fudge. “I just wish the Daily Prophet wouldn’t have splashed the headline that she was after the Girl-Who-Lived, it might upset the poor girl.”

“From what I heard, she doesn’t care much for the media attention she receives,” stated Lucius.

“Given her circumstances, I don’t doubt it, the media never looks at the positives of the situation,” said Fudge, who as Minister had more of his fair share of run ins with the Daily Prophet and the venomous quill of one Rita Skeeter. “Still, at least she won’t have to worry about being in danger, the Dementors should be able to detain Lestrangle should she try something.”

“Fortunately,” said Lucius calmly, who knew the Dementors would have their own ideas about who they would target and the girl’s tortured past would make her a rather intriguing target.

-

“Harry, there’s something important I need to tell you, didn’t get around to it last night, but I’ve been thinking about it,” said Elizabeth, as the twins sat in the study, both thinking it would not be a good idea to head outside with that nutcase on the loose. A shame, considering what a beautiful day it was outside, there was not a cloud in the sky.

“Take your time, Lizzie, tell me when you’re ready,” said Harry in an encouraging tone of voice and Elizabeth looked at Harry with a smile.

“When they were doing the adoption process at the bank, they found something inside me, the reason why Dumbledore knew it was me and not you as the savior, the one who defeated Voldemort,” said Elizabeth slowly, as she took a deep breath, as Harry looked back at her with an encouraging smile. “It was removed from my head, so you don’t have to worry about it affecting me negatively. According to them, I did retain my Parseltongue abilities along with a few other talents and perhaps some scattered memories, but its an uncharted territory, but the darker elements of a Horcrux have been removed, so at least I don’t have to worry about it.”

“Horcrux?” asked Harry in confusion.

“I didn’t think you would know anything about it, Harry, the goblins, what little they explained, it’s a piece of a soul of a ritual incased in an object and that object was my scar, very dark magic apparently,

taboo to even talk about, but it's a way to gain immortality," said Elizabeth.

"It's fading a little bit, you can see it," said Harry suddenly and Elizabeth stared at him. "You'll have to look in the mirror at it, but it's not as prominent as it was before. It might be so faint before long that it might see it."

"Good, a bit tired of everyone gawking at it, quite frankly," said Elizabeth before she suddenly brought everything back to the topic of conversation. "I was just wondering, the goblins made it seem like it was botched and that Voldemort's soul might have already been in shambles, but..."

"The diary?" questioned Harry and Elizabeth suddenly looked thoughtful, before she nodded. The same thought crossed her mind that Harry had just voiced and was the main reason why she wanted his opinion on the subject.

"I figured, no one could enchant something to be that sentient, even with the most advanced magic and even if was possible, would it?" asked Elizabeth. "Unless of course, it had a piece of his soul already..."

"We're heading into a pretty sketchy branch of magic, the fact that there is so much that can go wrong, especially with what seems to be a crude form of obtaining immortality," said Harry slowly, as he looked at her seriously. "If I'm right and if what the goblins are saying are true, is that it's hard to find more information about it. All that we should worry about now is that Horcrux is out of you."

Harry paused, before he nodded.

"The diary, you're probably right on that one, I did find it curious and figured it was dark magic, but once again, Horcruxes are the darkest of the dark magic," continued Harry. "If Voldemort made more, he's going to use objects of great value to the Wizarding World..."

“ I don’t know Harry, wouldn’t he use objects that are inconspicuous?” asked Elizabeth.

“Judging by what little we know on Voldemort, he’s the type to take objects not because he has to, because he can, there are thousands of artifacts, lost through time, that might not be missed, including to but not limited to the founders of Hogwarts,” remarked Harry in a thoughtful voice. “Once again Lizzie, don’t worry about it, it’s not our concern. Voldemort’s either dead or less than a ghost for all we know. Most of the followers who would follow him might have already given up on him...”

“This Lestrangle woman, she seems obsessed,” argued Elizabeth. “What if she tries to resurrect him?”

“Then our topmost priority is to keep you safe and let someone else deal with Voldemort,” said Harry. “If he comes after you, we’ll make him wish he didn’t, but at the same time, don’t try and go looking for trouble.”

Elizabeth just sat there. She really did fear Voldemort returning to an extent. Judging by Riddle’s personality in the diary, he was not one to take a defeat lightly and would be make to extract some measure of revenge. Still, he was always, she read once he was believed to be in a foreign country with a strong dark magic culture, likely Albania, if there was anything left. Naturally the official Ministry of Magic word as that Voldemort was dead.

“Harry, I have some letters to send, I’ll talk to you later,” said Elizabeth slowly, as she had some things to talk about. Now that the Horcrux was out of her head, she felt less distressed about the entire twin thing, but still wishing that Harry would have told her. Still, nothing could change what happened.

There would be more important bridges to cross later, in her third year at Hogwarts and the brand new classes she would have to take.

“Remus, I do thank you for coming on such short notice,” said McGonagall as Remus Lupin sat on the other side of the desk. “You did express interest some time ago about being the Defense Against the Dark Arts professor at Hogwarts, did you not?”

“Yes, Minerva, I did,” said Lupin wearily, who had just returned to the country with the news. “I asked Albus last year, but he convinced me that my little...monthly difficulty would be more trouble than it was worth. I decided to find work elsewhere, with the Ministry cracking down on employment opportunities...”

“I’ll cut to the chase, then, there have been a lack of suitable candidates for the Defense Against the Dark Arts position recently,” stated Minerva. “In fact, I put out the notice right as the students left and so far no one applied for the job. The last teacher ran screaming in terror, so I doubt it’s an employment opportunity that many would jump for.”

“I was under the impression that Severus Snape would jump at the chance to teach that subject,” said Remus calmly.

“I’m sure he would, but the problem is finding a capable Potions instructor, despite Severus’s temperament, he is the best in his field, and interest in the subject has dried up,” said McGonagall as she paused. “The real reason...”

“Elizabeth, I know, Minerva, there is no need to tap dance around the subject, the fact is Lestrage is after her,” said Remus. “I shouldn’t have trusted Dumbledore that she was safe. I could have checked up on her...”

“Wouldn’t have done any good, Remus, he mentioned that one of the charms he put up was a barrier to keep what people consider to be dark creatures out,” said McGonagall. “Whether or not he was being serious...”

“I wouldn’t put it past Dumbledore, shows how much he trusted me,” commented Remus. “The thing is that Harry warned me when I

met him a couple of times that Dumbledore did not have her best interests in mind and..."

Remus trailed off, realizing that he said something that he probably should not have.

"I'm aware of what Albus did," said McGonagall in a disapproving tone of voice. "He could have several crippled their magic, reducing them to the point of squibs by separating them in such a matter. He was convinced that it was for the Greater Good..."

"No it wasn't and it looks like he's the one paying for it, which is the best we can hope for considering the circumstances," stated Remus. "Does she know about Harry?"

"Give the mood she was in during the last few days at Hogwarts, I'm guessing that Harry told her, a bit too late for it to do it any good," said McGonagall. "She will find out that you were friends with her parents and..."

"Any suggestion on how to deal with that?" asked Remus.

"Good luck, she has Lily's temper," responded Minerva.

"I doubt that was supposed to help," responded Remus as he reflected back. He lost everything he had to Voldemort, all of his friends. Other than the few times he had encountered Harry, and this was a few years ago, he had kept himself distanced. He had only come to Hogwarts twice, once last year in an attempt to get the Defense Against the Dark Arts job, that Lockhart got and Dumbledore had convinced him it would be in the best interests of everyone for him to not take the job. Now he knew why, that was when he was having problems with Elizabeth and did not want a potential ally, even though that ally would be a werewolf and thus not considered to be credible by the vast majority of the Wizarding World. "Both of them will be in danger though..."



“I know and judging by the Prophet recently, they’re not the only one’s, pureblood nobles knocked off left and right,” stated McGonagall. “Don’t understand the correlation myself...”

“Lestranger is a psychopath, Headmistress,” said Snape as he had walked inside the office, barely acknowledging Lupin’s presence as he walked inside. “There should be no other explanation for her actions...”

“Still, it’s obvious who she was after,” said McGonagall, eyes narrowed.

“Not everything is about the Girl-Who-Lived,” stated Snape calmly. “But, I’m not here to psychoanalyze former Death Eaters, you called me her for a very specific purpose.”

“I was just telling Remus right now, that you would be willing to brew the newly created Wolfsbane Potion to deal with his problem should he take the position as Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher,” stated McGonagall.

“I will?” asked Snape, as he raised his eyebrow in surprise which earned him a stern look from McGonagall, that even Snape backed off a bit from. “Yes, Lupin, I trust you’ve heard of this new discovery. The one that would keep the more savage instincts at bay during the full moon, provided you are locked in a warded room.”

“I have, Severus,” said Lupin. “I trust you will be up for the challenge.”

“Yes, of course, if you take the job, I have no choice but the brew the potion,” said Snape, who refused to believe there was a potion beneath his ability to brew. “Naturally given what happened to the past teachers, you might be a bit hesitant to take the job.”

“I’ve given full consideration and as long as the proper precautions are taken, than I will be more than happy with taking the position, considering the lack of candidates that could handle it,” said Lupin calmly, as Snape raised an eyebrow but dared not say anything.

“Then it is settled, I will summon the school elves to fetch the ingredients of the Wolfsbane Potion immediately, as I doubt you would want me to botch it due to time restraints, the effects could be disastrous,” said Snape calmly.

“Why not get them yourself, Severus?” asked Minerva. “You’ve been cooped up in the castle for ages, I would think you would want to see something other than the walls of your Potion’s lab.”

“I would, but circumstances indicate that it might not be in my best interests to leave the school,” said Snape, as perhaps the fools in the Prophet had not make the connection, but he surely had. Lestrangle was killing pureblood nobles that had been acquitted as Death Eaters. Given Snape’s status as a spy, he was no doubt on the top of her list to be terminated by Lestrangle. “I’ll leave you to your meeting; I’ll just be burdening the situation.”

Without another word or a backward glance, Snape walked off.

-

September First had approached rather quickly and the students of Hogwarts were ready to return for another year. As Harry and Elizabeth walked at King’s Cross, they could not help but notice a few poorly concealed Aurors around the platform, wands drawn. They wondered if Bellatrix would be crazed enough to attack the platform but then again, given what they heard, they would not be surprised. Andromeda followed them, as she looked a bit stressed herself, there had not been any leads on Bellatrix, other than a trail of blood that she left by a few scattered and seemingly random killings, mostly high ranking purebloods in the Wizarding community.

“You two have a good year at Hogwarts, try and stay out of trouble,” said Andromeda as she looked around with a worried expression on her face, before the twins made their way on the train, as they carried their trunks. An Auror, poorly disguised as a Muggle, made his way around. Both of them entered the platform and dragged their trunks on the train.

“I’ll go find Lisa and Padma, meet up with you later, okay,” said Elizabeth.

“Okay, Lizzie, I’ll see you in a bit,” responded Harry, as he watched his sister leave and not two seconds later. “Luna! Ginny! There you two are.”

“Hello, Harry, I would ask if you had a nice summer, but given what’s happened recently, I doubt I would like the answer,” said Luna calmly and Harry nodded. “Mine was fine enough, except the news about Bellatrix Lestrange escaping from Azkaban kind have soured it.”

“I think for all of us, Mum was fussing about letting us out of the house just to catch the train,” said Ginny. “Dad had to calm her down, but she was losing her mind.”

“Not that your mother, is well past that point already,” said Draco calmly as he walked up to them. “My father is coming this way, Harry, I would advise you to get on the train, unless you want an encounter with him...”

“Up to something again,” muttered Luna and Draco nodded.

“I’ll try to catch up to you later,” said Draco, as he looked forward, his parents were right there, but Luna, Ginny, and Harry were on the train. “Father, I think they might have already boarded the train.”

“Just as well, it’s about to leave in five minutes time,” said Narcissa.

“Nowhere nearly enough to tell Harry what I need to,” said Lucius in a regretful voice. “Better move along Draco, wouldn’t want you to be late for school, I trust to see some progress on your marks before long. You can do better than you have been.”

“Yes, Father, I can,” said Draco as he turned, before he saw that Crabbe and Goyle were approaching. He winced, he doubted he

could lose them this quickly and he turned to them, before he adopted his arrogant bastard Malfoy scowl. "There you two are, I've been waiting for you, no doubt sleeping in, why don't you make yourselves useful and get my trunk on the train and don't you dare drop it this time."

Crabbe and Goyle just grunted, as they carried the trunk on the train, despite having their own to do so. Draco just stood there, arms folded.

"Do have a good term Draco, be sure to write every day," said Narcissa.

"Yes, Mother," responded Draco blandly as he turned his attention away, as his parents walked off. He did not how much longer he could put up with playing this double life but then again, he was sorted into Slytherin for a reason.

-

"I think Study of Ancient Runes should be an interesting class," said Padma. "They said it was hard, but considering it's used in so many careers..."

"Yeah, I'm taking that, Arithmancy, and Muggle Studies," commented Lisa. "What about Liz?"

"Same thing," said Elizabeth and Padma nodded, indicating that they were taking the same classes.

"Why Muggle Studies, though?" asked Harry curiously, he had not gotten around to asking his sister what classes she was taking.

"I want an easy class," responded Elizabeth with a shrug. "Given how hard Arithmancy and Runes are rumored to be, I desire a bit of a soft option. Plus, I doubt my experience at the Dursleys will give me much of a head start."

"I took the same thing, but just curious really," said Harry with a shrug. Muggle Studies tended to be one of the easiest classes. He

wanted to take Care of Magical Creatures too, but there was not enough time on his schedule and it clashed with Arithmancy anyway and that was a class that Harry was interested in, he had actually read up on the subject.

“At least you were all smart enough not to take Divination, I’ve heard things about that class, how the teacher is not right,” said Ginny.

“Well Seers tend to be a little...off,” commented Luna evenly. “The visions that they receive, they don’t make sense and they scramble their mind and twist their sanity. Oddly enough, sometimes the madness tends to make even more sense.”

“Luna, I don’t doubt that for a minute,” said Elizabeth, as the five laughed, before they were brought out their conversation by the train stopping suddenly.

“It can’t be stopping right now,” said Ginny in surprise.

“We’re only half way there, maybe there’s a problem with the train?” asked Elizabeth.

“Couldn’t have ran out of fuel, is charmed to have unlimited power,” said Lisa with a frown, as suddenly the temperate abruptly changed. “Is it just me, or has it suddenly gotten cold in here?”

“It’s not just you,” said Padma slowly as Ginny, Luna, and Elizabeth nodded, before they all shivered and Harry stepped to his feet, seeing mist rising up from underneath the doorway.

“ Oh no, they wouldn’t be this stupid to...” muttered Harry underneath his breath, before he heard a panic scream and a plea for help from down the train, before a loud crash. “Yes, yes, they would, those morons.”

“Harry what is it...” said Elizabeth before she trailed off, her eyes going wide as more mist seeped into the cabin and the others seemed petrified, but not to the extent she was. Harry slid back as far

as he could, but Elizabeth was unable to move as several cloaked figures moved inside. They sucked all the life out of the air around them and they turned towards Elizabeth, they seemed to take particular interest in her, turning towards her.

Elizabeth clutched her head, screaming in pain, as a loud crash echoed through her head and a high cold laughter. She saw red slits in her head and she saw images in the fog, her parents, fearful, Voldemort bursting through the door, her and Harry as toddlers, petrified.

“Lily it’s them, take Elizabeth and Harry and leave”

Elizabeth slid off, shaking madly, as her head felt like it was both on fire and freezing simultaneously, as she twitched. Harry made a movement but he felt numb, he was experiencing exactly what she was, although it was from a distance, only second hand really. The others looked too shocked to move and even wondered if they could.

“No, leave me alone!” shouted Elizabeth, as a burst of accidental magic shattered all of the windows in the compartment, but this only excited the Dementors, as more memories were around her head, she briefly saw a flicker of her and Harry forcefully separated, the despair both of them felt even though they were too young to realize. The entire train compartment got cold, as Elizabeth felt as if she had been buried in a freezer for some time. She saw images, images that she was forced to watch, even though she wished she could claw her eyes out to never see these again. She did not have the strength to do so, and she saw the very worst of her stay at the Dursleys. Each memory, appeared ten times worse, how she was ridiculed, pushed around, making her feel weak, useless, and almost as if she deserved everything she got.

Harry looked helplessly at her, but he was overwhelmed by his own problems.

“Someone help,” managed Ginny in a hoarse voice, but she found herself unable to move and neither did the others.

“ All of you should leave, Bellatrix Lestrange is not in this compartment or on this train,” said a voice, as Elizabeth struggled to hold her head up to see but she collapsed, shaking like mad, just barely seeing a blinding light and the compartment growing slightly warmer before she blacked out, unable to take anymore.

And that seems like a good place to stop, as we're finally into third year. Well, on the train, but close enough, huh.

## Chapter Twenty: The Map:

Elizabeth groaned as she attempted to assemble her thoughts. Everything was mentally a blank, her head was in pain and she was unable to move. The last thing she remembered, was those things entered the compartment, no one could move and she was bombarded with horrid memories that she had attempted to bury deep within her subconscious. She vaguely remembered Harry calling out for her but everything past that point was a complete and utter blank. She forced herself to remember some more, a bright light and then everything got a bit warmer before she passed out.

“She’s awake,” muttered a voice as Elizabeth tried to stir, opening her eyes as she saw Harry standing right beside her, looking nearly as bad as she felt, but also he looked really concerned for her own well being. She spotted Ginny right beside him, Luna not too far behind, along with Lisa and Padma, all breathing.

“Easy, Lizzie, you hit your head a bit when you blacked out, careful now, I don’t think you have a concussion, I managed to slow your fall somewhat, but still it’s not a good idea to mess around with something like that,” responded Harry as he and Ginny helped her up, so she could stand up and she saw a wizard with slightly graying hair who looked like he had been through something brutal very recently, as he pulled out a slab of chocolate and began to break it apart.

“You should all have some of this,” responded the wizard, as he handed the chocolate around, giving Elizabeth a particularly large piece. “I need to go up and speak to the driver, make sure no one else was affected by the Dementors.”

“Right we will, thanks Remus,” muttered Harry to the man, as he ate the chocolate and Elizabeth copied him. If Harry thought it was safe, then she had no problem eating it. It tasted rather good and made her feel a bit better instantly, at least on the physical level. Mentally, however, this was another matter entirely, as it would be a long time before she forgot exactly what she saw in her mind.

“You know him?” asked Lisa suddenly, looking at Harry with interest.



“Yes, Remus Lupin, met him several times a few years ago, he must be the new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher and I doubt we could have found anyone better,” responded Harry as he thought that was understating Remus, he was one of the best students for that subject in his year and he learned quite a bit from Remus about the subject. Given what he was, that was to be expected but still that mattered little. He had left just a year before Harry started Hogwarts, because of the increasing anti-werewolf legislation. Still, he returned and the timing was rather interesting. It did not take a rocket scientist to figure out that McGonagall hired him to get the students a decent Defense class, along with keeping an eye out for Bellatrix Lestrange, as an extra security precaution.

“Well he has to be better than Lockhart,” offered Padma.

“Anyone has to be better than Lockhart,” commented Lisa.

“A trained monkey can do better than Lockhart,” stated Ginny.

“Now, Ginny, that’s taking a bit too far,” admonished Luna. “Comparing monkeys to Lockhart, it’s insulting the monkeys.”

“You’ve got a point Luna, what was I thinking?” asked Ginny with a weak smile, as she looked at Harry, in concern. To be honest, she felt the Dementors and it was horrible. Harry got it worse than her and Elizabeth got it even worse than Harry, if that was possible. She tried to maintain a façade that she was fine, but there was a haunted look in her eyes, that appeared to be almost inhumane, quite disturbed. Harry looked at her.

“You’re feeling alright Lizzie,” whispered Harry.

“I’ve been better, not often, but I have been, but after I ate the chocolate, I feel much better, I’ll be okay, I don’t know why those things affected me that badly,” said Elizabeth as she shuddered, she still saw those things every time she closed her eyes to blink.

“Dementors affect everyone badly, but you...what’s happened, it’s much worse,” said Harry in a calm voice, it was lucky the Dursleys were killed by Bellatrix, because after what Harry saw, he had a strong urge to kill them. Of course, he shifted his hate towards Dumbledore, not that he had a lack of hate for Dumbledore to begin with. He had put Elizabeth in that environment and never had any good reason to it, other than those vague promises that she was safe. He had lied, just like he lied about everything else. He knew about the Horcrux that was the only way he could have known which one was the Chosen One. “Just take it easy, you’re stronger than people think you are, Lizzie and stronger than you think you are. It’s not going to be simple, Dementors can have serious long term affects, but at least they were only here for a few minutes.”

“No kidding, they drive the people in Azkaban insane,” said Lisa. “Just like her...”

“No need to dance around the subject, I know she’s after me, Lestrage is,” said Elizabeth, as she looked around. She had to find a way to prepare herself for the worst, she was sick of hiding behind adults and waiting for them to do the right thing. For the most part, she had learned with the Dursleys and Dumbledore that she could not depend on the majority of them. And she was tired of being weak, she was not going to hide in a corner, hoping that Lestrage or anyone else was going to find her.

“You must be stressed out about it, I know I would be,” said Luna.

“Of course I am,” said Elizabeth shortly. “I would like to put my hope in the Ministry...”

“I wouldn’t,” stated Ginny as she looked at Harry, who nodded in agreement. “I doubt they control the Dementors are controlled by the Ministry as much as they want to.”

“Giving what happened to the train, I’m almost certain of it,” responded Harry grimly, as the train finally started back up, as it approached Hogwarts but the atmosphere in the compartment was nowhere near enjoyment.

-

Minerva McGonagall had her share of times where she was so angry that she could barely speak but she had never been angrier in her life after the letter she had just read from Remus Lupin. It was a good thing she had stationed him on the train, they were this close to a tragedy that would have rocked the entire Wizarding World, to start off her first full year as the Headmistress of the school. The moment she finished the letter, she threw it down on her desk, before quickly scooping up Floo powder, and threw a handful into the fire.

“MINISTER FUDGE!” shouted Minerva at the top of her lungs and a minute later, the confused face of the Minister himself appeared in the fire. It was quite lucky she got a hold of him when he was in the office, there was times where he was very hard to get in contact with him.

“Yes Minerva, how may I help you?” asked Fudge in a tentative voice, as he looked at the Hogwarts Headmistress, with a completely humorless expression on her face. He had the woman for Transfiguration teacher during his last two years at Hogwarts and knew she was not one to cross under any circumstances.

“Dementors on the train,” said Minerva, barely able to get the words out because of her anger, glaring at Fudge like an angry lioness ready to savage some rodent for just waking it up. She managed to get her anger in check enough to ask a question. “Why was I not informed of this?”

“Dementors...I do apologize for this, but it had to be done and I had to limit the people who knew about it, because if Lestrage was going to go after Elizabeth on the train, we might have caught her off guard and gotten her out of the way quickly,” said Fudge in a nervous voice, choosing his words carefully. “I see the plan did not work...”

“That’s one way to put it, Fudge,” snapped McGonagall shortly. “Several of the students were found weakened on the train by the guard I informed you I would have stationed on the train, some of

them passed out. Miss Potter had it the worse of all, she would have been kissed had Professor Lupin not intervened with the Patronus Charm.”

“Merlin, I didn’t...I will have talk with the Dementors, I had no idea that they would have done something like that,” said Fudge in a nervous voice and McGonagall just narrowed her eyes, Fudge was obviously under the naïve belief that he had some kind of control over the Dementors when the fact was that they only listened to the man because he offered them a feast of horrible memories. “I would have informed you...but there have been leaks in the Ministry in the past and at Hogwarts...I’m not certain if we could have been safely overheard. I’m a bit concerned with a staff appointment, given what he has been accused of...”

“I understand your concern, but he is the best we have in the subject right now and he knows what will happen if he steps out of line, I doubt he will be helping Lestrage,” said McGonagall in a firm voice. “You should have told me Minister, I have an obligation to keep these students safe from the minute they step on the train in September to the moment they step off in June.”

“But no one was kissed,” argued Fudge stubbornly and McGonagall just glared at him. “I had no choice...”

“There is always a choice, Minister,” responded McGonagall. “You never told me because you knew I would have gone to the Board of Governors and had your little suicide mission with the train, when Lestrage was not even on it, blocked. And they better stay at the gates and the entrances. I don’t want one bit of mist inside this school.”

“Dumbledore would have understood the necessity,” said Fudge.

“I’m not going to even bother explaining why that comment is absurd,” muttered McGonagall. “Inform me next time Minister, I doubt the parents of the children in this school, most of them who would have a say in voting you into office would appreciate what you’re doing.”

McGonagall ended the call, she had to meet Elizabeth when she had gotten off the train at any rate, the girl was likely to need medical attention and it was her duty as Headmistress to ensure she would have recovered fine from the little incident on the train.

-

The group had gotten off of the train, with Elizabeth walking right between Harry and Ginny. Her knees felt slightly weakened, as images of the Dementors still flickered through her head, but she gave it a little shake. It was just something that she had to get through, no matter what. Luna, Lisa, and Padma walked over behind the, as there were other people who whispered, some looking petrified, almost expecting for more Dementors to pop up. None looked as bad as Elizabeth did, as she turned around, managing to climb up into the carriage, with Harry and Ginny on one bench, with Luna, Lisa, and Padma right across from them. They saw Draco off in the distance, with Harry mouthing: "later", at the curious look he was getting Elizabeth, as they made their way up into the school. Despite having the chocolate on the train, Elizabeth was feeling hungrier than anything. The ride up to the school remained quiet, a somber atmosphere, as she wondered why the Dementors had such an affect on her. Harry had offered his own theory, but surely there had to be someone who had to have it worse, that would have collapsed as well.

Then again, that would have been a topic of conversation, so perhaps that was saying too much. She gritted her teeth and decided to try to block it out of her mind, despite how difficult that might be.

"Miss Potter!" shouted the voice of McGonagall and Elizabeth looked, up, along with Harry. "I just got a letter from Professor Lupin, he said you were...ill on the train."

"That's a nice way of putting it," responded Elizabeth moodily as she turned to the Headmistress.

"Given the circumstances, it would be best if you were to go up to the Hospital wing and get checked out briefly before the feast," said

McGonagall and Elizabeth just nodded, arms folded, she hated when people treated her like she was delicate, made of glass, like the simplest nudge would crack her. Harry made a movement to follow here. "That won't be necessary Mr. Black, it should not take more than a few minutes to get her checked out."

"With all due respect, Professor, I think it is more than necessary," responded Harry firmly, as Elizabeth could barely suppress a smirk. Standing up to McGonagall was something that very few had done, if they had valued their health, but she obviously saw the worried look on Harry's face and just nodded.

"Very well then, but I can't promise that Madam Pomfrey will allow you inside the Hospital Wing," said McGonagall as the three entered the castle, making their way towards the Hospital Wing. Elizabeth looked very worried, surely a little fainting spell was not something that required an extensive trip to the Hospital Wing.

"Professor, I'm fine, really I am," protested Elizabeth stubbornly but McGonagall turned away, before she entered the Hospital Wing, steering the girl inside and just seconds later, the Hogwart's healer walked over, looking at Elizabeth with a remorseful look on her face, before she pointed to the girl.

"Please sit," responded Pomfrey shortly as Elizabeth did as she was told and the witch held a wand over her, doing a number of tests, none of which were familiar to her, but she frowned. "The good news is, she could be a lot worse considering the circumstances..."

"Thankfully," agreed McGonagall, who decided it was not best to tell the girl she had come very close to being kissed. In fact, she was not sure whether or not Lupin was overreacting, due to the fact that this was the daughter of his old friends. Even the best lost their heads in a crisis, as Minerva knew all too well.

"The girl should really have some chocolate..." started Pomfrey.

“Had some already, Professor Lupin gave me some, passed around to the entire compartment,” said Elizabeth, who had a haunted look in her eyes. “I just fainted, it’s not like it was a big deal...”

“You hit your head Elizabeth, I think it’s a big deal,” argued Harry sternly.

“No concussion, Mr. Black, I’ve already checked,” said Pomfrey, answering his unasked question. “All she really needs is a good meal and a good night’s rest, but I want you here first thing in the morning, after breakfast, so I can check you out. Is that understood?”

“Yes,” said Elizabeth shortly, like she had a choice.

“You may leave now,” said Pomfrey and Elizabeth got to her feet, feeling a bit wobbly but managing to conceal it, the last thing she wanted was to stay in the Hospital Wing, she would be bored to death within minutes. She followed Harry down to the Great Hall, McGonagall following closely, almost as if she expected Bellatrix Lestrange to jump out from behind a suit of armor.

-

McGonagall rose to her feet at the end of the feast, to address the students.

“As you all know by now by their impromptu sweep of the train, the Dementors of Azkaban will be at the school this year, I must warn you that the rules of being out of bounds will be tightened up this year, for your own safety, as Dementors do not listen to pleading or any type of reason,” responded McGonagall. “Hogsmeade trips will be arranged with escorts to the village, at predetermined times and it is important to return to the school by the appointed time. Unfortunately, until Bellatrix Lestrange is safely back inside Azkaban, there will be restrictions on the curfew and Hogsmeade visitations. As of right now, Quidditch is still on, but will be limited to sessions that can be monitored, with three practices per week a team maximum. I know, some of you tend to be fanatical, but I’m afraid this must be done.”

McGonagall paused, as the students looked at her.

“On a brighter note, there a few Quidditch vacancies to be filled, contact Madam Hooch for more information,” said McGonagall as Filch cleared his throat. “Also, a few items have been added to the list of banned magical items and can be found on the door of Mr. Filch’s office. Now, prefects, escort the first year students to their dormitories, as tomorrow will have a full day of classes.”

-

Steven Nott walked in the house, as the floorboards beneath him creaked. His wife was already in bed, he had returned from an emergency meeting of the Council of Blood Purity. Their planned investigation of Lucius Malfoy for his failure to eliminate the Potter girl had fallen by the wayside for a more pressing problem. Bellatrix Lestrange had apparently decided to make it her mission in life to eliminate the Council, at least eight five percent had served the Dark Lord during his reign and the others, well they sympathized with his cause, but did not get involved. Bellatrix obviously had been unhinged due to Azkaban and was unable to tell the difference between reality and her own delusions. The Dark Lord had perished, if not, he would have made his presence known by now and Bellatrix had screamed several times from her cell that she would make those who had betrayed the Dark Lord pay. Nott had simply gotten on his life, he saw the Dark Lord has a way to enhance his standing in the Wizarding World, nothing more really. Just like the Council, he did not join them out of concerns for advancing their cause, just for gaining more support and power.

He moved into the kitchen where Bellatrix Lestrange sat at the table, calm expression on her face as she looked at him.

“Hello, Nott, it’s been too long, in fact the last time I saw you, it was the fact you tortured some three year old little girl, but I’m sure it was just the Imperius Curse,” said Bellatrix, still not blinking, as she looked at Nott. Nott lifted his wand, but Bellatrix disarmed him with nothing, before she levitated the table. It smashed against him, magically pinning him to the wall. “Please, I was trained by the Dark



Lord himself, punished when I failed, when you on the other hand, had fancy pureblood tutors that Daddy paid for with no pain at all. It's obvious who the tougher of us are."

"Lestrangle, what do you want?" gasped Nott.

"Blood," said Bellatrix as she licked her lips, looking at Nott with a crazed expression in her eyes. "You've decided to not be a man and take your punishment for your crimes, putting you in Azkaban where you should have been and trust me, you did deserve it. While I hated Azkaban, at least I did not renounce the Dark Lord. I was incompetent enough to get captured and let's face it, I might have had it coming, given the fact that the Auror Department wanted to remove my head after what happened to the Longbottoms, when I tortured them into insanity."

"Yes, that was your own fault Lestrangle, the Dark Lord was gone, you and Rodolphus had nothing to gain when..." said Nott before he was silenced.

"Rodolphus had nothing to do with the Longbottoms' insanity, much like in other activities, he stared blankly like an idiot while I did all of the work," said Bellatrix. "Still, he and his flea bitten brother, along with that little whiner Crouch Junior, they were dragged off too and quite frankly, I'm sure they might have done something vaguely resembling a heinous crime, if you're sensitive enough to put it that way."

"You won't get away with this, the Council will put you down, the Ministry will too," said Nott.

"The Minister of Magic couldn't catch a sexually transmitted disease in a whorehouse," scoffed Bellatrix. "At the rate of the Council is dying, I doubt they would be much of anything."

"Who told you about us?" demanded Nott.

"Lucius Malfoy," said Bellatrix bluntly but she did not even give Nott any time to comprehend what she had told him. "AVADA KEDAVRA!"

The green light cut through the air and caught Nott right in the chest, taking him out. Bellatrix flicked her wand, cutting his ear. Blood dripped down from it, as Bellatrix put her finger in the blood, as she removed a folded up piece of parchment in her hand. She made a crude checkmark in Nott's blood on the list right next to his name.

Turning her back, she left, summoning the Ministry on her way out. The wife that Nott thought was asleep would be dead, smothered in her sleep by Bellatrix. Crude, but effective, as far as Bellatrix was concerned.

-

To say Severus Snape was worried would be the understatement of the century. He had the latest edition of the Daily Prophet draped over his desk, looking at it, eyes narrowed. The Daily Prophet kept talking about how Bellatrix was after the Girl-Who-Lived, but the more news of Bellatrix slaughtering acquitted Death Eaters reached the paper, the more certain Snape was that the journalists were misled in their assumptions. Granted, Snape guessed that if Bellatrix had the chance, she would slaughter Elizabeth Potter with no second thoughts but that was not her motive. Her motive, it was clear, that she was going to murder every single follower of the Dark Lord that had forsaken him.

No one had done that more than Severus, it was one thing to claim that the Death Eater in question was under the Imperius Curse, but another thing all together to spy on him and report information back to Albus Dumbledore of all people.

Thus, until her soul was sucked out and her body was burned, Severus refused to leave the safety of the Hogwarts walls. It was just that simple.

-

Harry walked from the Great Hall, seeing that others had apparently already left for classes. He had his first Arithmancy class first thing in the morning, the Hufflepuffs were with the Ravenclaws for a double

period, and he did not want to be late for his first class, but he walked into Draco, who looked relieved.

“Thank Salazar I managed to catch you before class Harry, there’s been some rumors going through the school, that Elizabeth had fainted on the train,” said Draco as he looked at Harry for clarification.

“I’m afraid they’re true, the Dementors boarded the train and Lizzie...she had quite the adverse reaction to them,” said Harry and Draco responded with a nod.

“She’s not the only one, Azkaban is the last place I want to end up if there are a hundred as opposed to the dozen or so that were on the train,” said Draco. “I don’t know how these rumors got out, thankfully the Slytherin house is more worried about what’s happening with Lestrage, her slaughtering the purebloods, Theodore Nott got a letter today, his father was the latest murdered...”

“Your father could be next,” responded Harry.

“I think he might figure that, because I overheard him talking over the Floo to Fudge the day before Hogwarts, he was the one who gave Fudge the idea to set the Dementors on the train, making him think there was a possibility that Bellatrix would be on the train,” said Draco. “Yet, if she was about ready to kill Nott’s father, she was nowhere near the train and when she hears of this...”

“She’ll be a bit more careful,” said Harry and Draco nodded. “I better get to class”

Harry made his way to Arithmancy class, thinking hard. Nott was definitely a Death Eater who had been acquitted under the Imperius Defense and Bellatrix had slaughtered him. A few other names were familiar to Harry, as he read them in old additions of the Daily Prophet in the past, some acquitted as Death Eaters under the Imperius Defense. Bellatrix’s scheme was easy to figure out, but the Daily Prophet would talk about nothing else other than the fact that Elizabeth was in danger.

-

“We’ve learned so much more in one class with Professor Lupin than we did with an entire year with Lockhart,” said Lisa as she left the class, followed by Padma and Elizabeth.

“Yes, we did, even though that boggart, if I didn’t know I was facing it, I would have freaked out,” responded Padma as she left the class, as they both turned to Elizabeth, who was staring up at the ceiling, as if it interested her, before she snapped her eyes back towards them.

“Yeah it was a good class and he’s a really good teacher but...I didn’t get to face the boggart,” said Elizabeth in a deflated voice, wondering if Lupin thought of her as weak.

“Well there wasn’t enough time, I suppose,” stated Padma in a tentative voice.

“The class ended five minutes early,” insisted Elizabeth.

“I guess he didn’t want to overwhelm you, after what happened two days ago,” said Lisa and Elizabeth looked at her, eyes slightly narrowed. “Look, I’m sure if you go to his office and talk to him, there will be a simple explanation to what he done. I’m sure if you ask him...”

“Yeah, you’re right, I’ll go ask him,” said Elizabeth, who felt she needed to have a word or two with Lupin anyway for other reasons other than her not fighting the boggart.

-

“Everything is ready, George,” said Fred as the Weasley twins waited outside the corridors, leading from the staff room.

“Indeed, my dear brother, seems like everyone could use a bit of a spirit lifter, all things considered,” responded George as he checked to make sure everything in place.

“But this would be an excellent opportunity to test out our latest invention, if we want to get our joke shop up and running after school,” added Fred.

“Of course, we could be using this time to being preparing for our Ordinary Wizzarding Level exams this year,” said George seriously before he broke into a grin and the twins began to laugh, looking extremely amused at this possibility before a loud meow brought them out of their thoughts and Mrs. Norris appeared, looking at them before she disappeared.

“The map, check it, see if Filch is coming,” stated Fred under his breath as George looked at him.

“I thought you had it,” responded George, but as Fred shook his head, George fished around in his pockets, before he shrugged his shoulders, shaking his head, as the twins looked at each other panicked. “One of us must have dropped it somewhere...”

“So, less than a week into the school year and you’re up to no good already,” wheezed the voice of Argus Filch, as he looked at the twins, who tried to look innocent but the bitter old caretaker was not buying this act for even the briefest of seconds. “You two are coming with me to my office.”

“Now Mr. Filch, have a heart, we didn’t do anything,” pleaded George in what he thought was a reasonable voice.

“Yet, but you were going to be, disrupting the school and making another mess for me to clean up!” snapped Filch as he roughly nudged the twins, who both wondered where the map was. They definitely had it when they left the Gryffindor Common Room. They were lead off by Filch, for their first detention of the year, a record, considering the fact it took them so long to get around to getting one.

-

Remus Lupin was sitting in his office, he had a rare break and was just finishing getting settled in. Given the rumored curse on the

position, he was not going to settle in too much. He prepared to make some lesson plans for the next few weeks, up until the full moon where he would be out of commission for a week. He did hope that the Wolfsbane Potion that Snape was making would help reduce some of the symptoms and cut his time down a little bit. Right now, it was the closest thing to a cure and something that Remus doubted very much he would see in his lifetime.

A knock on his door had brought Remus out of his thoughts and caused him to look up.

"Please come in," said Remus politely and the door opened, as Elizabeth walked in, a calm expression on her face, but she looked at Remus as if trying to figure him out. "Ah, Elizabeth, do come in and take a seat."

"Hello, Professor Lupin, I would like to ask a question about the class earlier today," said Elizabeth and Remus looked at her, encouraging her to continue. "We fought the boggart and I was rather disappointed that I didn't get a turn. I wondered why you didn't let me to do it."

Remus paused for a few seconds. He figured this was coming and the girl did not seem too mad, at least not yet. Of course, Lily always had forced calmness before she blew up and started shouting at people and not too long later, the hexes started to fly. James learned that lesson quite painfully during their third year, when he had pranked Lily and ruined his chances at dating her until their seventh year.

"I thought that much would be obvious for someone who gotten the marks you have gotten, but perhaps not, it is not because of you, but because of what the boggart would have turned into," said Remus. "I feared that the boggart would have turned into Lord Voldemort himself and I doubt the panic that it caused would have balanced out with the practical opportunities it would have given."

"Voldemort, I can see why you would have thought that, but the last time I've come face to face with Voldemort was when I was a year old

and I don't fear a ghost," said Elizabeth, who decided to omit her encounter with the diary, Tom Riddle had not quite become the Voldemort that everyone feared after all. "He's long gone..."

"Intriguing that you believe that," said Remus, who was willing to be open minded either way. Many thought that Voldemort was finished, while many like Albus Dumbledore thought he was still out there, in some foreign country, severely weakened but alive and others thought so as well, mostly because Dumbledore did so as well.

"The truth is that I do, because let's face it, Voldemort's not the wizard I feel I have to worry about meddling in my life," said Elizabeth coolly. Bellatrix killing the Dursleys had been a twisted blessing in disguise, as it had made Dumbledore look even worse and his power had been neutered even further. "And I know who you are, Professor."

"I beg your pardon, Elizabeth," said Remus calmly, but the girl looked at him.

"Harry gave me Mum's diary for Christmas, it was interesting, mostly a lot of thoughts and additions on charms and Potions through her years at Hogwarts, but also, she spoke of a Remus Lupin a few times, not too often, but often enough for me to pick it up," said Elizabeth as she looked at Remus. "You're him."

"Yes, Elizabeth, I was friends with your parents before they...before that night happened," said Remus, who knew fully well this was going in a direction he did not like.

"I'm sure you've heard what my oh so charming relatives were like," commented Elizabeth calmly and Remus turned, before he nodded.

"Given, the fact that Dumbledore had told me that you would be safe, I didn't think twice about you sending there, obviously a mistake in hindsight, but Dumbledore gave no reason for me to distrust him," stated Remus carefully.

“Well, you were mistaken there,” responded Elizabeth coolly. “Of course I do wonder why you didn’t even bother to check up on me when I was younger.”

“Dumbledore...” started Remus but this one word.

“ Didn’t want you to get too close, because you might have discovered that I was not being treated well and his little plans would have crashed down over his head,” said Elizabeth and Remus looked at her.

“You don’t know the entire story...” started Remus but once again Elizabeth cut him off.

“You weren’t forced to listen to Dumbledore, you chose not to listen to Dumbledore,” said Elizabeth calmly as she looked at Remus. “I wonder why? Maybe it was because of the fact that you might have blamed me for the death of my parents...”

“Elizabeth, no, I don’t, what gave you that idea,” said Remus.

“I spent the first ten years of my life in a cupboard, barely anyone gave a damn, but I survived, I was raked through the mud all last year because I dared let a Muggle abuse me, knowing full well that if I would have fought back, I would have been expelled,” said Elizabeth who was building up a nice head of steam. “Then, I was judged evil because I have a gift that’s normally associated with dark wizards. What Harry did, I understand, even though I don’t like it but you have no excuse, Lupin.”

“ Let me explain,” said Remus patiently but Elizabeth had no patience.

“No, you’re great as the Defense Against the Dark Arts Teacher, but you’re ability to judge people, well it’s lousy, my parents would be ashamed of you,” said Elizabeth in an icy tone of voice. “I’ve said what I needed to say, we’re teacher and student, no more than that. I understand why you didn’t let me fight the boggart, but as for the rest



of what you've done, I know I can never trust you because you chose Dumbledore over me."

Without another word, Elizabeth stormed out as Remus sat there. That could have went better, but at least she was not shouting. The truth was, he feared this was coming and he had agreed with most of what he said. He had not pressed the issue with Dumbledore because Dumbledore had given him an education when no other Headmaster would have let him into Hogwarts. He was grateful for that, but what Dumbledore did to the daughter of Lily and James, he would never forgive.

She had left before he could explain about the ward Dumbledore hinted about that would keep dark creatures out. Considering Dumbledore never said it outright, just pretty much hinted around, Remus began to consider the fact it was a bluff, to keep him away.

Whatever Dumbledore intended to do, the exact opposite result happened and Remus feared that if Elizabeth was pushed too much, she would go on a path that might not be for her best interests. She did fit the profile for the type of childhood that most dark witches and wizards had.

The only thing was that Harry was there and he would watch out for his sister. Harry had a good heart in general, but most times he was apathetic towards the plight of others that were not his friends and family. It often times seemed like the only way to survive in the Wizarding World.

-

"Another one killed today," said Ginny in an awed voice, as she was walking through the hallway with Harry, they were going to meet up with Luna in a little bit, as Harry was going to help the girls do their Defense homework.

"Decapitated head hung from the neighbors clothes line post, Ministry is at a loss to figure out Lestrangle's motives," said Harry, reciting the story that he had found in the Prophet from memory. "Has

she even once been sighted anywhere near Hogsmeade, much less the school?"

"If she has, the Prophet's not printing it, Skeeter's really having a field day, taking Fudge to task and the Dementors being sent on the Hogwarts Express without warning finally made the paper," said Ginny.

"Thankfully without Lizzie involved, we don't need any more of those snide articles like Skeeter wrote last year," said Harry as he looked at Ginny. "She's looking a bit better, but she doesn't like being helpless."

"I can understand perfectly, after all of those articles last year, anyone would second guess themselves, especially with something like that," said Ginny. "She threw off Riddle, helped you beat him in the Chamber of Secrets..."

"Not without a tragedy," said Harry. "There's not much hope for Granger, she's pretty much in a coma, if she ever comes out of it, she won't be able to walk again and that's if she's lucky."

"She might have been a bit unpleasant at times, but she doesn't deserve what she got, Riddle used her as much as he used Lizzie," said Ginny quietly. "Still, Harry..."

"Having her take the blame, it might seem like a heartless thing to do, but Ginny, she doesn't have a life to ruin after what happened to her and Lizzie has been through enough," said Harry.

"I understand why you did it Harry and while the Muggleborn sentiment might be a little lower than before, not that it was ever good to begin with, I sometimes feel Dad is fighting a battle that he can't even hope to win when he pushes for equality for Muggleborns," said Ginny carefully. "If this gets out..."

"Malfoy knows, I know it in my gut," said Harry. "He's willing to go along with the fact that Hermione was the one all along, because he sees it as a way to complete his goals. He won't let it get out."

The two paused, as they saw a piece of parchment on the corridor floor, just two down from the Ravenclaw Common Room. Harry was curious; especially considering it appeared to be a map. He picked it up, and he looked over it, eyes widening when he realized what it was.

“I don’t believe it, it’s the Marauder’s Map,” gasped Harry, who he could not believe his pretty much implausible luck of finding that particular magical aid in the hallway, right where he and Ginny were walking.

“The Marauder’s Map?” asked Ginny, in an attempt to place the name, because she heard it somewhere before but then it hit her like a well placed Bludger. “Fred and George, they talked about them before, calling them among the greatest pranksters of all time in fact, I think they idolize them.”

“To call them pranksters would be only talking about a fraction of what there accomplishments are, they’re much more than that, in fact, I doubt no one had learned more about this castle then them,” said Harry as he looked at the map, before he nodded. “This has to be it.”

“How exactly do you know about this map?” asked Ginny curiously.

“My Dad was one of them, Professor Lupin told me, they lost the map in their seventh year though and I’m guessing Fred and George must have found it somehow,” said Harry.

“So that’s how they know so much about the school,” said Ginny nodding, it all made sense to her now and she figured Fred and George would be in many more detentions than they were without it and she saw Harry hold the map, before he muttered something, tapping his wand with it to clear it, before he put it inside his pocket. “You’re not going to give it back, are you?”

“Of course not, technically this is mine and Lizzie’s property, well her’s more than mine because I was adopted out of the Potter line because of that blood adoption ritual, but I’m sure she’ll be willing to

share it with me on occasion,” said Harry as he looked at Ginny. “Unless you think I should...”

“No Harry, of course not, it’s their own fault they dropped it,” said Ginny. “Besides, there are uses for something like that.”

“I know, Lizzie might find it useful, in keeping an eye for Lestrage if she enters the castle” said Harry, who felt he could not rely on the Ministry of Magic to keep an eye out for the crazed Azkaban escapee. “Still, I’m sure Luna is waiting patiently for us, we shouldn’t keep her waiting too much longer.”

Ginny nodded, as the two continued to walk towards the Ravenclaw Common Room, Harry planning to invite Elizabeth along and tell her about the Map in private if he saw her.

## Chapter Twenty One: Darkness Within These Walls:

“Wow,” said Elizabeth in an awed voice, as she looked at the Map, that Harry had pulled her into a private corridor to the school. “It must have taken years to do this type of charm work, at least that’s what I would think based on what Mum’s written, this is amazing, I can’t believe they would be able to make something like that.”

“Lizzie, it is impressive,” agreed Harry as he looked over the Marauder’s Map, taking in all of the sections of the Map, just by looking at the Map, it was an impressive marvel of magic. “Shortcuts to and from classes, imagine all the time you would shave, that you would not have to be taking the long way through corridors, you would never get lost, as you can see on the map, it shows your name right there.”

“I see it and you too,” said Elizabeth as she looked at the dot, before she looked at it with interest. “Says Harry Black as well, which is a good thing, that would have been an awkward thing to explain if either of those twin nightmares or anyone else for that matter saw the name Harry Potter on the map.”

“Guess that is fortunate,” agreed Harry as he looked over the map. “The Marauder’s Map never lies, but I guess it can be fooled with powerful goblin blood adoption rituals or maybe it knows that I wanted to be hidden and adjusted accordingly. It is magic, there are any number of explanations, many of which don’t make sense.”

“Not to mention all of the passageways out of the school, not that I’d ever use them, just an observation I was making,” said Elizabeth hastily and Harry turned to her, before he nodded in agreement. “And...if Lestrage does come after me, I’ll be warned, because her name will show up on the Map...”

“Well, at least that’s what we hope, but you can’t really check it every minute of every day but every couple of hours for anything strange, if you’re...” stated Harry, he was about to say that once she was safely in her dormitories she would be safe but stopped himself, remembering the incident in their first year. “The point is that using

the Map wisely will help you stay out of trouble and keep safe. But there's one thing that I want you to promise me."

"And that is?" asked Elizabeth curiously.

"Never, under any circumstances, let anyone know you have this Map, Ginny and I both know because we found it, but other than the three of us, that's it," said Harry firmly. "It's too valuable to lose and if it should fall in the wrong hands...well I don't want to even begin to guess what might happen."

"I have a few good ideas," said Elizabeth grimly.

"Just say Mischief Managed and the map will be wiped clean," answered Harry and Elizabeth nodded in thanks.

"Mischief Managed," said Elizabeth, holding her wand over it and it was a blank piece of parchment that she stuffed into her pocket right away. "Potions is coming up next..."

"Yeah, we better get going, the last thing we want is to be late for Snape's class," said Harry as the twins walked from the corridor, both taking a shortcut that Harry had spotted on the map that would get them to the Dungeons about as quickly as could be possible.

-

Severus Snape was in quite the foul mood. Not because he had just taught a class of first year Gryffindors who could not even begin to appreciate the joy of the art of potions making. Even the Slytherins in the class had been testing Snape's patience; he had offered some rare criticisms of them. The Slytherins steadily became more and more lazy and willing to live off of their names, rather than be ambitious enough to make their own breaks in life. A few exceptions, granted, just like there would always be a few Gryffindors that did not make Snape wonder why he had even bothered.

Still despite all of that, that was not what put Snape in the mood he was in, nor was the Wolfsbane Potion that he was required to brew

for Remus Lupin. When he had put the fact it was Lupin he was making the Potion for out of his mind, he enjoyed working with the complex brew. In fact, when analyzing the formula, he actually made a few notes about how he might improve it, not that he was going to bother to experiment for Lupin's sake. Still, he made the potion for the werewolf, and would be able to fill in for a few days in teaching Defense Against the Dark Arts when the werewolf was indisposed.

Still, the problem came with a piece of communication he got from the exiled Albus Dumbledore. While Dumbledore had removed himself from the public eye, he had not stopped working on gathering information for some upcoming battle. The former Headmaster believed it was just merely a calm before the storm, Lord Voldemort would return and be an even more powerful threat than ever. Naturally, Snape grudgingly owed Dumbledore for keeping him out of Azkaban and Dumbledore exploited that little arrangement a bit now and again.

At first, Snape thought it was a trap, a ploy of Bellatrix's to get him out of the school and alone, vulnerable, without the protections of the castle. Once Dumbledore had communicated the message through three different channels that only he and Snape knew, then it was all too obvious that it was in fact the real deal. Dumbledore refused to even hint what the news was, but he said that Snape should meet him on Hogsmeade weekend at the Hog's Head, where he would relay some potentially vital information to Snape. Snape wondered if the old man had any idea how much he was putting his life in peril or that he cared.

Still, Albus Dumbledore was not a man that anyone could say no too. Snape thought this as he knocked on the door of Lupin's office, to give him the first dosage of the Wolfsbane Potion.

"Yes, please come in," said a voice from inside the office and the door pushed up, with Lupin looking up from his desk, marking a batch of third year essays. "Ah yes, Severus, what can I do for you?"

"The potion Lupin, the notes that I have found indicated it is most effective when taken in concentrated small doses for a period of a

week before your...monthly ordeal,” said Snape as he handed Lupin the goblet, as Lupin took it, looking at Snape tentatively. “Lupin, I would be foolish to poison you, given the fact that the staff knows that I am making you this potion.”

“No, not that, it’s just that, are you sure that it will work like that?” asked Lupin.

“Yes, Lupin, I’m certain,” said Snape calmly, refusing to show any emotion towards the werewolf. “Taking it all at once might work for a couple of years, but I’m sure you plan on living a good long life and would not want the pain with dealing with transformation. Do drink every drop though.”

“Thank you, Severus, I appreciate it,” said Lupin as he drank the potion, looking rather off in a far off look. He had taught a class with the third year Ravenclaws just an hour ago, a rather bright group of students, but none was brighter than Elizabeth. Given how smart her parents were, it was to be expected and it was nice to see that her unfortunate upbringing had not deadened her ambitions to learn. It had unfortunately made her jaded in other ways.

“You look troubled, Lupin,” said Snape.

“It is nothing that should concern you, Severus,” said Lupin in a false cheerful voice.

“So, I’m sure you’re pleased to get reacquainted with the daughter of one of your best friends, a friend, that decided to break Ministry law for you, I might add, in becoming an illegal Animagus,” said Snape. “Fortunately, the girl has none of her father’s arrogance and every bit of her mother’s abilities in the art of Potions, something that makes our existence a bit more peaceful. She has even helped tutor a hopeless student, making him nearly acceptable, but I’m afraid her abilities do not extend to working miracles.”

“She works hard in class,” said Lupin carefully, not wanting Snape to know that Elizabeth was angry with him about not checking up on her.



“I’m sure you might have had interactions outside of class,” stated Snape as he looked at Lupin. “Given the fact you never bothered to visit the girl once she was young...”

“She’s not too pleased about that,” muttered Lupin and Snape just looked at him, an unreadable expression on his face. “I should have told her about dark magical creature ward that Dumbledore put around the premises.”

“The owl post is a wonderful invention, Lupin, as is the Muggle postal service,” said Snape, who knew that Dumbledore would have likely had any letters blocked and the Dursleys would have burned letters for the girl, but still, he could not resist making Lupin feel guilty. “I’ll see you tomorrow Lupin, when I bring the second dosage.”

“Yes, Severus,” said Lupin with a polite nod, as he winced at what happened and wondered how he could make it right. He thought about trying to get Harry to talk to his twin, but doubted Harry would be too pleased with what he did as well. He went back to the essays, more to give himself something else to focus on.

-

“Three more killed,” whispered Lisa, as she looked at the paper at the Ravenclaw table two days before the planned Hogsmeade Trip. “All in their own houses and one slaughtered in their own bed.”

“If these people can get slaughtered in their own beds, what hope do any of us have with going safely out in public,” said Padma, as she looked at Elizabeth, who closed her eyes. “Sorry, Liz but...”

“No, I agree with you, it’s just there have been twelve deaths so far, I think, not counting the Dursleys,” said Elizabeth.

“Sixteen,” corrected Luna who had joined them. “Some of them pureblood nobles, but a couple just family members who just happened to be home at the time Lestrangle had come calling.”

“Kind of makes you think what game Lestrangle is playing,” said Padma. “She’s never even stepped one foot inside of Hogsmeade, much less the castle and the Wizengamot is putting pressure on Fudge to remove security from Hogwarts and put addition measures around the remaining Wizengamot members that have not been killed.”

“Remind me again, how many of those nobles were on the Wizengamot?” asked Lisa.

“Eight,” said Padma as it took her a second to remember, it might have been more, at the rate Bellatrix was tearing through her victims. “Who knows how many more haven’t gotten to the Prophet yet and that the Ministry’s trying to cover up.”

“It’s almost like she’s trying to wipe out all purebloods,” said Luna thoughtfully.

“No, she’s trying to wipe out the traitorous Death Eaters that claimed they were under the Imperius,” said Harry suddenly, causing the group of girls to jump, as he showed up behind them with Ginny. “Nott, Yaxley, Edwards, Charleston, all names that have popped up before in history books among accused Death Eaters...”

“She still killed the Dursleys, thinking that I might have been there,” argued Elizabeth.

“At this point, I don’t even know what Lestrangle might be thinking,” said Lisa. “Is there any other names of possible people who she might want to murder, who got off on the Imperius Defense?”

“Only one comes to mind, someone named Lucius Malfoy, who also got several others off, and...by a couple of accounts pointed the Ministry in the right direction to where Bellatrix and her husband was holed up,” said Harry. “Don’t know if she knows it or not, though.”

“I would say we would be reading about Lucius’s obituary in the Daily Prophet from the start,” said Ginny but she frowned. “Lucius is

the most common example that people use when people complain about accused Death Eaters and the Imperius Curse Defense...”

“Ginny, very little of this is making any sense, not that life makes sense to begin with, any sane person should realize that,” said Luna softly. “The only thing we know for sure is that Lestrangle killed the Dursleys, is killing pureblood nobles, and is likely to be after Elizabeth, the last conclusion more based on common sense than actual evidence.”

“The security should be enough to keep her at bay, though,” said Harry.

“I wouldn’t be so sure,” cautioned Padma as she looked at the paper. “They’re saying that they are voting to replace the recently deceased members of the Wizengamot today and then they’re voting on whether or not to lessen the security precautions around Hogwarts and move them towards the homes of Wizengamot members.”

“Guess my safety is once again in the hands of ignorant people,” said Elizabeth and Harry put his hand on her shoulder gently.

“I’m afraid so,” said Harry. “She has the world in a panic.”

-

Dolores Umbridge walked down the corridors of the Ministry of Magic. She looked over her shoulder, a bit paranoid as many high ranking Ministry officials were as of late, with Bellatrix Lestrangle. Despite their reassurances to the Daily Prophet, they were not even beginning to get close to putting Lestrangle away.

She had a far pressing matter to take care of. Elizabeth Potter, she knew the girl would be dangerous from the start. A half blood that commanded the admiration of many, no matter what the reasons for this was and that had been a bit unwilling to follow the status quo of the Wizarding World. Things remained the same for a reason, to keep those who had earned the power through years of magical lineage in power and to keep those of lesser quality down to the level they

belong. Should the girl be motivated enough, she could inspire change and many others could take up the cause for change that would make people like Umbridge obsolete.

Once she learned of the girl's reaction when in the presence of the Dementors and the fact that she was confined to the castle for her own protection during Hogsmeade weekends, had given Dolores a brilliant idea. Given the fact that the girl had nearly been kissed once before, the Dementors obviously sensed something in her that they needed to eliminate and being the career politician she was, Dolores intended to exploit this advantage.

"Madam Umbridge, what do I owe this unexpected pleasure?" asked Dawlish.

"You're in charge of the Dementors on the Hogwarts grounds, are you not?" asked Umbridge.

"Yes, I meet with them," said Dawlish, as he shuddered at the thoughts of the task he had been given. He had drawn the short straw on this occasion.

"The Dementors are to inspect the castle during Hogsmeade weekends," said Umbridge and Dawlish looked at the woman in confusion. "The Minister would agree should he know but there is no time to inform him. I have received a tip that Bellatrix had been sighted near Hogsmeade."

"Indeed?" asked Dawlish in confusion, he was unaware of the Auror Department receiving such a tip but he was certain a fine upstanding woman with years of distinguished Ministry service like Dolores Umbridge would never lie to him. "I will make the proper arrangements to do so, once most of the students have been cleared out of the castle."

"Yes, the younger students have been informed to stay in their Common Rooms for their own protection while the majority of the staff are out of the castle to oversee the Hogsmeade trip," said Umbridge. "Please, do remember to tell the Dementors to deal with

anyone that is the slightest bit of a threat, as they may be an accomplice to the fugitive Lestrangle.”

“Absolutely Madam Umbridge,” said Dawlish, not thinking twice about it. “Will there be anything else you require me to do?”

“Just one thing, do not under any circumstances inform anyone of this inspection, we don’t want word getting back to Lestrangle and losing our chance to finish her off,” said Umbridge and Dawlish responded with a nod. “I thought you could be a valuable help Dawlish and I’m not disappointed. The Ministry thanks you for your service and I’m sure your career will only rise from here.”

Dawlish walked off, with a bit of a smirk, realizing the potential doors it could open for him if his orders to the Dementors were responsible for capturing Lestrangle. He could imagine becoming the Head of the Auror office and later the Minister of Magic, quite frankly, it was too good of an opportunity to pass up.

-

“Don’t worry, Liz, we’re bring you back plenty of candy from Honeydukes, it will be almost like you were there,” said Lisa in an assuring voice but Elizabeth just looked at them, as Harry stood right next to her. “I know, but Lestrangle is bound to be captured sooner or later, she’s only human.”

“The level of success is bound to get to her head, yeah, I know,” said Elizabeth but she was not convinced. Harry had made the suggestion for her to skip Hogsmeade and he was doing it as well, as he could be in perhaps a similar amount of danger but it did not make it any easier for her. She had been looking forward to taking a trip to the village. “I’ll see you after a few hours, I guess.”

Padma and Lisa nodded, as they walked off, Harry and Elizabeth planned to meet with Ginny and Luna, to get some work done, the school would be quiet and they still had some homework left over, before they could completely enjoy their weekend. As the two twins walked, neither saying anything for a minute.

“Lizzie, I wish we could have gone too but...” stated Harry but Elizabeth held her hand up to stop Harry from making an apology for something that technically was not his fault.

“I know, Lestrangle is out there and it’s okay Harry, trust me, I’m not mad, actually I’m relieved,” said Elizabeth, breathing a sigh of relief and Harry looked at her in understanding, she was still a bit traumatized after her encounter with the Dementors, despite it being more than two months after it happened. It would take time and Harry guessed she blamed herself for it. Had he been in her position, Harry was almost certain he would have done the same thing as well.

“Come on, the others are waiting,” said Harry and the two walked down the hallways, to meet Ginny and Luna at the library. The sooner they got their homework done, the sooner they could have some free time to themselves.

-

“I trust this is worth my time risking leaving the sanctuary of the school,” said Snape, as he approached Dumbledore at a private table at the back of the Hog’s Head.

“I think you’ll discover the pieces of information I’ve located will be worth your time,” said Dumbledore as he sighed. He had seen better days, having been removed as the Headmaster of Hogwarts and from the Wizengamot, but that was just the beginning. He rarely went out in public, not wanting to cause a disturbance. He was not bothered by what others thought of him, they had a right to their opinion, but he heard more of his fair share of nasty remarks towards him as of late, remarks that could potentially start a situation that could put lives in peril. “My plans for young Elizabeth, sadly derailed, have now...”

“The train has been blown up, I believe,” said Snape.

“Yes, now that Bellatrix killed them, the poor troubled girl, she’s always been a bit warped, but I fear Azkaban has unhinged her completely,” said Dumbledore remorsefully as he looked over his

glasses, towards Snape. "I did manage to piece together her motives, through great effort..."

"I did too, but there was no great effort, she is murdering Death Eaters that were acquitted," said Snape. "While I'm not familiar with all of the names, there are enough names that she killed that I know of that point to this being the cause..."

"Partially correct, Severus, but there is more to this than meets the eye," said Dumbledore. "Tell me, have you ever heard of the Council of Blood Purity?"

"No," said Snape shortly.

"I guessed you wouldn't have, given your half blood status, you would have not been ever considered for membership, no matter how good your talents are," said Dumbledore. "The Council intends to keep old pureblood families in the highest reaches of power in the Ministry of Magic. Sadly, they have too much power, it would take an act of faith to destabilize them. Many of them joined up with Lord Voldemort, being seduced with the prospect of more power. Also one other piece of intriguing information has reached my ears, through a contact who is acquaintances with a Council member was given an intriguing bit of information that might shed some light on Bellatrix's motivations."

Snape just looked at Dumbledore, a calm expression on his face, as Dumbledore paused for a few seconds, dramatic effect setting in, before the former Hogwarts Headmaster decided to enlighten Snape.

"One of the members of the Council was a Lucius Malfoy and Mr. Malfoy was suspended pending further investigation, on being a disgrace to pureblood ideals, quite an ambiguous piece of information, but something extremely interesting came to mind," said Dumbledore. "As far as I know, Lucius Malfoy is still living and breathing but of course you speak to him on a more regular basis than I might, Severus."

“Yes, that is correct,” said Snape. “Wait a minute, Bellatrix could have gotten into Malfoy Manor if she wanted to at any time to kill Lucius, yet she did not...”

“Exactly Severus, I’m pleased to see that we are on a similar wavelength with this situation,” commented Dumbledore in a calm voice. “Many of the people Bellatrix murdered would be likely candidates for this Council, old families, old money, prominent and respected within the Ministry. Some of them on the Wizengamot in fact and others in other positions in the Ministry, yet the traitorous Death Eater, Lucius Malfoy, remains alive, despite allegedly using his money and influence to get many off. That makes little sense...”

“So you’re trying to tell me that Bellatrix may have intended to kill Lucius, but somehow, he manipulated her into doing his dirty work and eliminating the Council of Blood Purity, as revenge for suspending him,” said Snape slowly. “It actually does make perfect sense and a few words that hint that the Council had to do with blocking any attempts of the Dark Lord returning...”

“Bellatrix would not think twice about slaughtering them all,” concluded Dumbledore as he looked grim. “It is unfortunate that I do not have a list of the remaining members, I might be able to collaborate something with the members of the Order of the Phoenix to trap her.”

“So, I suppose you’re going to tell me that I should not worry about her killing me,” said Snape calmly.

“No, Severus, I will not, because I have little doubt that Bellatrix still intends to make you pay and would not hesitate to messily murder you,” said Dumbledore. “Please be careful, but Bellatrix is not the only concern today. Far from it as I got a disturbing piece of information, from a contact of mine in Egypt.”

Snape’s eyes bolted up as Dumbledore removed an object wrapped in a cloth and pushed it in front of the Potions Master.



“Now my ancient Egyptian is quite rusty, but I believe this piece of slab tells of an Earth changing battle, a great darkness rising more powerful than ever before, and the fate of the world in the hands of a jaded savior,” remarked Dumbledore as he looked over the slab and Snape looked over it, before he nodded.

“I’ve come to a similar conclusion, a prophecy of some sort I take it?” asked Snape and Dumbledore nodded. “Need I remind you the trouble that the last prophecy caused for us...”

“My memory is as sharp as ever Severus and I fear the prophecy that Professor Trelawney was given was just a byproduct of this ancient prophecy,” said Dumbledore, looking over it. “I fear that our troubles with Tom were only stalled during that night and this gives me more reason. He will return and will be more dangerous, but how is unclear. The jaded savior is obviously young Miss Potter and that’s a bridge we’ll cross when we get to it.”

“How could the Dark Lord become even more dangerous?” asked Snape. “He’s already achieved the closest thing to immortality possible, according to what you’ve told me. What else could he do to make him more dangerous than ever before.”

“I know Tom Riddle better than anyone and I fear that he might take one step up,” said Dumbledore.

“What could be higher up than immortality?” asked Snape.

“Godhood,” stated Dumbledore blandly. “Or the magical equivalent, rather. If my guess is correct and they are rarely off, he does not want to just stop at being the most powerful wizard on Earth. He has higher ambitions, to become the literal personification of magic itself.”

“Is that possible?” asked Snape in a skeptical tone of voice.

“With Lord Voldemort, I only know to expect everything, including the impossible,” said Dumbledore, he knew of nothing that could allow Voldemort achieve this particular goal. Still, contrary to popular belief, he did not know everything, only most. “The prophecy made

over thirteen years ago may be the key to this however as is Elizabeth.”

“I suppose you intend to inform her of the role she will have to play,” said Snape lightly.

“In due time, even if she was prepared to listen to me, there is no need to burden her with this knowledge, Tom still hasn’t found a way to reclaim his former power and body,” said Dumbledore. “I hope that day will never come but when it does, then we’ll have to tell Elizabeth everything, the entire unfortunate truth.”

“I wish you luck, Dumbledore,” concluded Snape swiftly. “Is that all?”

“Yes, that will be all, Severus,” said Dumbledore. “Do have a safe trip back up to the school.”

-

“Snape must have been in a really foul mood when he assigned that essay,” grumbled Ginny as the quartet had left the library, with half of the day already gone.

“No, he does that one every year and besides it wasn’t that bad,” said Elizabeth.

“Well, of course it’s not that bad for you, because you like Potions,” responded Ginny. “Still thanks for the help, I don’t think I could have gotten it completed without your help.”

“Don’t mention it to Ginny,” said Elizabeth as she waved the hands off. “The others should be returning soon, they said the trip would be cut shorter.”

“A hour actually,” said Luna as she looked around. “The Castle is pretty quiet without anyone in here, it’s rather odd, don’t you think?”

“I think it’s rather peaceful, nice to have it mostly to ourselves for a few hours,” remarked Elizabeth, as other than them, there was barely anyone in the Castle, no one gawking at her because she was the Girl-Who-Lived. This week she was beloved, mostly because there were no articles written in the Daily Prophet, tearing her down, but who knew what next week could bring.

“Yes it is,” agreed Harry, who sensed a bit of what she was thinking, the twin bond was still a mystery to the extent of what it worked and the magic within it would take a while to repair after what Dumbledore had done.

“Is it just me or is it getting cold in here?” asked Ginny, shivering slightly and Harry looked at her curiously, before he shook his head.

“It’s not just you it’s...” stated Harry, before he trailed off.

“It’s them,” said Elizabeth, backing off with a bit of fear, she could feel them, but she could not see them.

“They weren’t supposed to be let into the castle,” hissed Ginny angrily.

“Someone tell them that,” said Luna, as she clutched her arms over her, shivering once again, barely able to form a complex thought, as they saw several robed figures swooping. Elizabeth made a movement to reach for the Marauder’s Map, to find a corridor that was not infested by Dementors, but she could not move. Elizabeth backed against the wall, she saw the memories once again, memories from her existence at the Dursleys and a glowing pair of red eyes, along with high cold, laughter.

The Dementors swooped down, sensing fear and they saw the girl. They knew precisely who she was, the one who denied them an unlimited feast of souls to quench their thirst for misery. The Dark Lord had promised them this, but she stopped them and she must suffer. They enjoyed what happened to the others as well, remembering that foolish human had ordered them to deal with anyone who was a threat and this female child was a big threat to

them all, they could feel it. She needed to be dealt with as soon as possible.

Elizabeth tried to figure out a way to repel them away from her but she knew nothing. Lupin did something on the train, but she had no knowledge of how to fight Dementors, especially when she was rapidly losing the will to resist. She spotted Harry and Luna, both looking nearly as horrid as she felt and Ginny looked like the least affected of the four, not like that was saying much. Ginny struggled, holding her wand and managed to blast a suit of armor nearby, making a loud clang, hoping to attract the attention of someone, anyone in the castle, that might be able to help.

One of the Dementors reached forward, grabbing Elizabeth's arms with a slimy pair of hands, pulling her forward, as his hood lowered. She struggled, but being this close to a Dementor were causing a great deal of horrible memories to bombard her mind at once and she shook madly.

Harry looked up, the Dementors mere presence blocked them from doing anything and he wished he had not looked up, it was the most hideous thing he had ever seen. He wanted to throw up when he saw what was underneath the Dementor's hood, it was almost like a sickening black hole, putrid, sucking all life out from around it and it was inches away from Elizabeth's face.

"Stay away from her," said Harry but he was too weak to manage much more than a strained whisper, despite his best antics.

A bright light filled the hallway that caused the Dementors to recoil. Two shapes appeared, but Harry could not make it out the shapes but he heard voices, as the others collapsed around him.

"Lupin, I will take them to the Hospital Wing, you inform McGonagall of what has happened, I daresay she would love to have another chat with the Minister of Magic," said Snape softly.

"Why are they in the castle?" asked Lupin.

“That is a question that I would enjoy having an answer too as well but right now, we have work to be done now that they have been banished from the premises for the time being,” stated Snape.

## Chapter Twenty Two: Preparing for the Worst:

“It was extremely lucky you two found them in time, especially Miss Potter,” said Madam Pomfrey as she looked at Snape, who stood in the back of the hospital wing, unconcerned as the four teenagers were put on beds, in various states of Dementor induced shock. Elizabeth had the worst of it, with Harry not far behind and then Luna, followed by Ginny, who looked extremely pale at any rate. “Utterly absurd, allowing Dementors in a school with children, they don’t have any chance to cope with their effects, in fact, full grown adults have hardly any ability to cope with them.”

“Yes, I trust they will be in capable hands and I suspect Lupin has already located the Headmistress by now,” said Snape, as he turned. He wondered what Ministry official authorized this or even if this was authorized. Perhaps it was just because he was a Slytherin but Snape doubted very much that the Dementor attack was a coincidence, in fact, far from it. The fact that the girl was in the heart of the attack both times proved that something was off.

-

Minister Fudge sat in his office, with a frown on his face, as he looked at the latest edition of the Daily Prophet. His approval rating was down a tenth of a point and that was never a good sign, when he was at his lowest point of popularity to begin with. The pureblood killings had dried up a bit recently, but considering that Bellatrix Lestrange was still out there, she was stalling for time. Fudge had a small squad of Aurors both inside and outside of his home, guarding his office and all windows had three layers of alarm charms. He liked to see Lestrange break through that.

“MINISTER!” shouted an angry voice from the fireplace that made Fudge jump and his mood only darkened when it was revealed to be Minerva McGonagall. Fudge stuck his head down, pretending that he was not in his office. “Don’t you dare think I don’t know you’re in your office, Minister. A situation has happened in the school.”

“Yes, Minerva, how may I help you?” asked Fudge as he winced slightly, unable to look the Headmistress straight in the eye, but her face was in the fire. In fact, he could not think of anything he might have done to raise such anger.

“You do remember our last conversation just before Hogwarts began,” said Minerva in deadly calm and Fudge stiffly nodded his head, he remembered it all too well.

“Yes and I’ve kept you briefed on any potential alterations of the Dementor security patrol around the school, so you can keep the students safe and sound,” said Fudge and Minerva just looked at him with a glare that was making him feel rather uncomfortable.

“Your Dementors entered the walls of Hogwarts and came across four students, rendering them in a horrific state, putting them in the Hospital Wing,” said Minerva.

“No one was Kissed?” asked Fudge, who braced himself. If one of the students were kissed, it would be the end of his career.

“No, no one was, although one came perilously close, Elizabeth Potter,” said Minerva in a stiff voice, she was angry beyond all words and Fudge was paled. “I suppose you thought that Bellatrix Lestrange just might be lurking behind a suit of armor somewhere in the school and thought you would send the Dementors in on the off chance your hunch was right.”

“No, Minerva, that’s not the case, in fact I was unaware of this little inspection because it was not authorized,” stated Fudge nervously and Minerva looked at him, obviously not believing him. “Look, I’m as shocked about this as you are but rest assure I will have a full investigation, everyone who had access to the Dementors, will be questioned and I’ll do everything in my power to make sure something like this does not happen again.”

“For your sake, Minister, I hope that you had nothing to do with this,” said Minerva and Fudge nodded, looking fearful. The fact that someone else could maneuver the Dementors other than him had

him spooked. He had authorized only a small number of senior Aurors to stake out Hogsmeade and keep the Dementors in line, all of them that will be questioned.

-

Elizabeth's eyes flickered open. Her head still pounded in pain and she strained to remember what happened. Then it came back to her in a flood, the Dementors, again, they had been let into the school and they had glided towards her, Luna, Ginny, and Harry, as if they were fugitives of Azkaban. They seemed to direct their malice towards her especially, as her mind was haunted by flickers of her worst days at the Dursleys, almost like a highlight reel, then green light, a cold high laughter, and the death of her parents, again, bombarding her mind. She looked around, to see she was in the Hospital Wing. At that moment, she felt angry with herself, passing out once again.

"Good you're finally awake," said Madam Pomfrey as she handed Elizabeth a rather sizeable chocolate bar. The other beds around her were empty. "You have been out for most of yesterday and all of this morning. I'd eat, you're extremely weak."

Elizabeth took a large bite out of the chocolate bar, feeling a bit better, but she still felt like she got ran over by a train.

"What about the others?" asked Elizabeth.

"They were all shaken up but after a night, they were out of the Hospital Wing," said Madam Pomfrey as she turned to check on another patient. Elizabeth ate the chocolate, quietly, twice she was in the presence of Dementors and twice she faded into nothingness. It was beginning to get annoying and she felt weak. "Rest right now, if you pass your check up, you should be out of here by tomorrow morning at Breakfast."

"Yeah, looking forward it," muttered Elizabeth, as she continued to eat the chocolate, she shuddered as she remembered that thing that was inches away from her face, before she passed out. It was horrid,



almost like there could be no life within it and it was sapping her will to live. Straining to remember, she barely was able to recall exactly how she avoided meeting her end.

“Elizabeth, you’re finally awake!” called a voice and Elizabeth looked up, to see Harry, looking completely relieved to see her awake and Madam Pomfrey looked at him, with a scandalized look on her face.

“Really, Mr. Black this is a Hospital Wing and Miss Potter needs her rest,” stated Madam Pomfrey sternly, as she narrowed her eyes at him but Harry just stood there, unblinking.

“Just ten minutes and I’ll be out of your way,” prodded Harry and Pomfrey looked at her for a few seconds, considering his request very carefully, before she sighed.

“Make it five Mr. Black and then get out,” said Pomfrey as she walked over, to tend to the other patients and Harry walked over to Elizabeth.

“How do I always get myself into these messes Harry?” asked Elizabeth in a weak voice.

“That’s something that I want to know as well,” said Harry as he looked at her. “The only thing that matters is you’re okay, but that was a pretty close shave when you look at it. Dementors swooping down on you, us unable to do anything, you were this close to receiving the Dementor’s Kiss.”

“The What?” asked Elizabeth in confusion.

“The Dementor’s Kiss, the Dementor’s most horrid and ultimate weapon to use against their victims and even seeing them with the hood down is going to give me nightmares for weeks,” said Harry with a slight shudder as he was at a bit of a distance when he saw it, but Elizabeth was face to, well black soul sucking hole, with the thing.

“What does it do?” asked Elizabeth, unable to help her own curiosity. She was sorted into Ravenclaw for a reason, she wanted to know everything she could and the grave look on Harry’s face indicated that he either did not want to explain it or did not know how to properly explain it.

“Well, for lack of a better term, they suck your soul out through your mouth,” said Harry, which caused Elizabeth to stifle a gasp behind her hand, that was a horrid weapon. “Now, it’s kind of a little cruel joke, as a person can breath and function without a soul, but they are like a robotic shell, cut off from all the wonders of the world. I wouldn’t say they could live either, but they could just exist.”

“There is a way to fight them off,” said Elizabeth stubbornly.

“If there was I wouldn’t know it, Professor Lupin might, as he’s the Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher,” said Harry and Elizabeth had an extremely sour expression on her face at that piece of news.

“I’m not asking him for any favors,” said Elizabeth in a stubborn voice. “He knew...”

“I know but Remus Lupin is a good man it’s just...well he puts his trust in the wrong people sometimes,” said Harry carefully. “Elizabeth, if there is any way you can learn to defend yourself, you should take that opportunity to do so, especially since someone might not be around to pull you out of the fire next time.”

“I’ll think about it,” responded Elizabeth in a bland voice, not wanting to trust Lupin right now. She barely knew the man anyway and while she respected his abilities as a teacher, she could not get past the fact that he did even bother to check up on the daughter of one of his best friends was something that she could not even look past.

-

“Dawlish, you were on duty for the Dementors on the day that the incident within the walls of Hogwarts occurred,” said Fudge, as two Aurors stood on either side of the man, with Umbridge sitting in the

back of the office, with a smug expression on her face, at the fear that Dawlish had in his eyes. "A horrible incident, that nearly had four students, including the Girl-Who-Lived, subjected to the Dementors Kiss. What reason did you have to order the Dementors to enter the walls of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry?"

"Madam Umbridge told me of a tip that said that Bellatrix Lestrange might have found a way inside of Hogwarts and was biding her time within, she suggested that I have the Dementors inspect the school, as most of the students were to be in Hogsmeade and the others were to be confined to their dormitories," stated Dawlish and Umbridge looked at him, cool under fire, not bothering to deny any of this.

"Dolores, is this true?" asked Fudge in forced calmness.

"I did inform Dawlish of this but I did attempt to contact him for a follow up, stating after an investigation was conducted, this tip was proven to be a false lead," said Umbridge calmly and Dawlish looked at the woman, this was news to him.

"I had no idea about this, I thought the plan for the Dementors to search the school was still to happen," argued Dawlish and Umbridge just looked back at him, with a sugary sweet smile, the perfect scapegoat for her failed plan to eliminate the Girl-Who-Lived. This was the reason why she did not directly order the Dementors into the school, despite having the ability and the authorization to do so.

"An owl was sent to you," said Umbridge.

"I never received any owl," protest Dawlish.

"Can you prove that?" asked Fudge as he looked at Dawlish, who was sunk. Dolores Umbridge had many more years of Ministry service than he did and her word would be taken more than his, not to mention the fact that she was a close advisor of the Ministry of Magic himself. "Well?"

“No, I can’t, Minister, but I just know what I told,” said Dawlish. “I had thought the students would be cleared out of the way...”

“You should have checked with Minerva McGonagall at any rate,” said Fudge and Dawlish opened his mouth, in an attempt to reveal that Umbridge told him not to but found himself unable to speak. “You will be confined to house arrest, pending a further investigation and if found guilty you will be sentenced to Azkaban for misusing Ministry resources. Is that clear?”

Dawlish nodded, as the silencing charm was removed from him, too late to do any good, as the two Aurors escorted him out.

“His intentions were noble enough, Lestrangle has remained a step ahead of the Ministry and the old families are running scared,” said Fudge with a sigh. “We live in dangerous times, Dolores.”

“That we do, Minister,” said Umbridge, who felt herself to be untouchable. Given all the protections around her family estate, there was no way Lestrangle could get to her. The Minister might have been as jumpy as a cat under a rocking chair but she was fearless. There was no way that Lestrangle could kill her.

-

Elizabeth’s first class after being released from the Hospital Wing was Defense Against the Dark Arts and it was a rather memorable one, for all of the wrong reasons. Rather than Professor Lupin being the teacher, Professor Snape was sitting behind the desk and he decided to do material that was quite a bit harder than what they had been doing lately.

“It wasn’t all too bad all things considered,” said Padma as they left the class. “Given the way my sister and the rest of the Gryffindors had been belly aching about what Snape gave them, you were thinking they were given Auror Level material.”

“At one time this was third year level material and I guess Snape decided to try to maintain those standards,” said Lisa with a shrug of

her shoulders. "Still, werewolves, how to identify them and how to kill them, that's a bit interesting, don't you think?"

"It's almost like Snape wants us to find something out," said Elizabeth suddenly, as she looked at the assignment. Professor Lupin was ill, but yet he was nowhere near the Hospital Wing, as Elizabeth had been required to check back there for the next week after her Dementor induced ordeal. "It's almost like he's trying to tell us something."

"What makes you think that?" asked Lisa.

"I don't know, it's just werewolves seem like a rather peculiar subject to assign when you're just filling in," said Elizabeth quietly, as she looked at the assignment again, as if trying to detect some kind of hiding meaning, but found nothing. "Maybe I'm just a bit jumpy after what happened..."

"You do look a bit pale still after what happened," said Padma.

"Yeah, are you sure you're alright?" asked Lisa.

"As alright as I'll ever be, I'll be honest from you, being that close to Dementors is nothing that I would want to do ever again," said Elizabeth slowly as the others nodded. "I just don't know why they seem to go after me that much."

"Surely there is some way to repel them?" asked Padma and Elizabeth responded with a slight shrug of her shoulders.

"Don't know, that sounds like Restricted Section material," said Lisa in skeptical voice. "Maybe you should ask Professor Lupin about it when he gets better. He did save us from those Dementors on the train, perhaps he might be able to teach you something that could help."

"Perhaps," said Elizabeth, who thought about at least thinking about the possibility of asking Lupin for help in dealing with the Dementors but brushed it aside. She would just need to limit her time outside of

her own Common Room, classes, and meals and she should be fine. With any luck, Lestrangle would trip up and get captured and she would never have to deal with those things again.

-

“The Ministry’s in shambles, especially the Auror Department, they’re being stretched too thin,” said Harry, as he walked down the corridors, a few weeks before Christmas, clutching a letter he received from home, as he talked to Draco, Luna, and Ginny. “Three more deaths in the last month, not as often as they were, but that just means she’s taking more time to catch them in an awkward position...”

“Pansy’s Father was one of them killed,” supplied Draco. “Just yesterday she found out, she’s been a nightmare, but can’t really blame her. At least I have the excuse to leave her alone to deal with her grief now. You know what the peculiar thing about this latest death was.”

“What is it?” asked Luna in a curious voice.

“Nathan Parkinson was never once excused of being a Death Eater and he doesn’t really seem like the kind who would have been able to cover it up anyway,” said Draco as he looked at the others seriously.

“Are you sure?” asked Ginny.

“Yes, the fact is, I know more about these things, Father keeps an extensive archive of old Daily Prophets in his library, with detailed transcripts of each and every trial, both people who were thrown in Azkaban and acquitted of all crimes,” said Draco. “My charming Aunt, just when we had her figured out, she managed to change everything.”

“The press is still under the assumption that Lizzie is the target,” said Harry.

“Yeah and the pureblood slaughters are getting regulated to afterthoughts, I bet that’s annoying some people,” said Ginny and Draco responded with a nod. He had heard many complaints in the Slytherin House that even when there was severe pureblood genocide, the Girl-Who-Lived had to hog all of the spotlight. It was amusing and both distressing in a way.

“I still think Lestrage would not pass up the chance to kill Lizzie if she was given the chance, she was pretty obsessed with Voldemort,” said Harry, as Draco shuddered at the name, causing Harry to roll his eyes slightly, before he cleared his throat. “Nymphadora said in her letter that they’re posting at every remaining Wizengamot representative home and the Aurors are stretched really thin, that they have to use the trainees to make up the numbers in a few of the lesser connected families.”

“Bet your mother had a fit because of that,” said Ginny and Harry nodded, as the group walked down the hall, there were many fearful faces in the school, as with all of the formerly untouchable pureblood families slaughtered, it seemed as if no one was safe.

-

In an abandoned shack that belonged to a reclusive Muggle inventor that Bellatrix had killed just because she felt like that, she poured over the list of the Council of Blood Purity. Nineteen names had been killed, with six names remaining on the list, those six had been rather difficult to locate. Perhaps they knew the game now that so many of their fellow Council members had been slaughtered like hogs. Once, this Council was wiped out, the Dark Lord would be allowed to rise again and Bellatrix would be rewarded with wiping out so many roadblocks, most of them traitors to the cause of their master. Nineteen members of that accursed Council murdered and at least a dozen or so killed just because they were in the way. Of course, Bellatrix only kept track of the Council members she slaughtered, the others were unimportant.

She still had one special name she needed to eliminate and that time was coming. The one that dared defy the Dark Lord and somehow

weaken him, would be the crown jewel. Bellatrix almost saw her previous murders as training for the greatest victim of all, nothing would come closer to the joy she would achieve when the accursed defeater of the Dark Lord was eliminated.

She stuffed the slightly torn parchment with dried blood back into her pocket, before she decided to search around for another potential victim. The night was still young and killing one foolish old Muggle had only just barely begun to quench her thirst.

-

Elizabeth had found researching werewolves for the assignment that Snape had given them to be rather intriguing, even though she pretty much had a clear idea that the entire assignment would be thrown out when Lupin had returned. The Gryffindors, most of the Hufflepuffs, and even a few Slytherin third years had protested how hard the assignment was, but Snape refused to listen, shocking his own house that they would be held to the same standards as the rest of the school. Based on that bit of information, Elizabeth was never more convinced that Snape had some kind of point to prove for some reason and as she looked through the books she had found, she was beginning to piece together some intriguing conclusions.

Werewolves tended to be rather ragged after the full moon. They also had pre maturely greying hair and other signs of aging. The disease had cut down the life spans of the people affected, with the accelerated aging. Embracing the monster within only slowed the process somewhat and only really caused lingering insanity. Those who struggled to fight the disease had a rather rough time one a month and their bodies felt the strain of each transformation, not to mention their minds.

There was much more, but the fact that many of the physical signs listed matched Remus Lupin to the letter, not to mention the fact that he just happened to be indisposed right around the time of the full moon, lead Elizabeth to one logical conclusion and quite frankly, she suspected in the back of her mind that something was off. The fact remained that while she harbored some resentment towards him for not bothering to contact her, she also felt just a small bit of sympathy



towards him. If it was discovered that he was a werewolf, his life would be made very difficult. He would be judged by what he was, as opposed to who he was.

It kind of reminded Elizabeth of someone else the more she thought about it and the fact that she would never be seen as anything but the Girl-Who-Lived by the majority of the world. A sad fact that she decided to live with and it was a lot easier when she came to the conclusion that she owed nothing to the Wizarding World.

Still while she had resentment towards Lupin for one thing, the fact was she could not hate him for being a werewolf. She just wondered if anyone else would come to a similar conclusion. Her friends had gently brushed off her thought that Snape had some motive in assigning this project and she felt both relieved and a bit terrified that she was correct with that fact.

Still, Lupin being a werewolf was not his fault. He did not choose to get bitten. The fact that he never bothered to check up or even write her at the Dursleys was another matter entirely.

-

Christmas was rapidly approaching and the sign ups inside the castle were increased, mostly because of the heirs of pureblood families having no place to go, while the mass of paperwork was sorted out on where they were to go and some not wanting to leave the safety of the castle, with fear that Bellatrix Lestrange would jump out and attack him. The only sure thing was that she had not found a way to breach the security of the castle and thus they used it as a security blanket, to keep them free from danger.

Elizabeth on the other hand looked forward to getting out of the castle for a couple of weeks and had decided to leave for the holidays immediately, as did Harry. Both of them agreed the castle was cramped and given the two close encounters with the Dementors, they thought that going home would be the safest option, especially since the Ministry might go for another impromptu inspection using those Dementors during the Christmas holidays.

“Elizabeth!” called Harry, causing the girl to spin around and look at her twin in surprise.

“Yes, Harry, is there something wrong?” asked Elizabeth but he just shook his head.

“No, nothing’s wrong, I was just wondering if you had given what we talked about after the second attack any more thought,” said Harry and Elizabeth responded with a sigh, she knew Harry was not going to let this matter drop for any time soon.

“The truth was, I was thinking about but...” stated Elizabeth as she trailed off, wondering exactly how to best explain what her conflicted feelings. On one hand, she did not want to be weak in the presence of Dementors. On the other hand, she did not want to rely on Lupin to do her any favors.

“You don’t want to look weak in front of the Dementors, yet you don’t want Lupin to do you any favors,” replied Harry and Elizabeth looked at him with a shocked double take, it was almost as if Harry had plucked the words right out of her own head.

“I guess that about sums it up,” said Elizabeth and Harry just looked at her, arms folded. “Is Lupin really the only option I have?”

“Well, I’m sure Professor Snape would know, but would you want to spend any more time with him then you had to?” asked Harry and Elizabeth shuddered slightly at the thought. Even though she was one of the top, if not the top, student in their year at Potions, Snape still gave her an uneasy feeling she could not pinpoint. He had that unfortunate ability to make someone feel guilty, even if they were not doing anything. It was not anything he said, it was more what he did that caused Elizabeth a great deal of discomfort. “I’m sure, Professor Lupin won’t say no if you asked him.”

“I’m not saying he wouldn’t,” replied Elizabeth as she had tried to find an alternative in asking for help, pouring through book after book but none of them had any tips on defending against Dementors and quite frankly, that did not surprise her. The Ministry used them to

guard their most dangerous prisoners and if anyone could get a hold of the information to deal with them, it would defeat the purpose. "It's just...I don't know..."

"You have a few trust issues and that's understandable," said Harry wisely, Elizabeth had been manipulated pretty much her entire life and it still floored Harry that it could have been him in this position had Voldemort went right instead of left with his casting of the Killing Curse. "Professor Lupin put a bit more trust in Dumbledore for...reasons that you're going to have to get out of him."

Elizabeth just nodded coolly and Harry cleared his throat.

"However the Dementors are a problem, even more so that what Remus Lupin did or did not do and right now, he is the best person to help you, so I think I'm going to take you to his office and ask him to help you learn to defend yourself," said Harry and Elizabeth opened her mouth to protest. "Call it the overprotective older brother privilege..."

"You're only older by eighty nine seconds Harry," responded Elizabeth, who was unable to smile in spite of herself.

"Still older, now we might be able to catch Lupin before he leaves if he left now," said Harry as he motioned for his twin to follow him to the office and Elizabeth did so, extremely grudgingly.

-

Remus Lupin felt tired, the Full Moon was rapidly approaching, having fallen in the middle of the Christmas holidays. While his monthly affliction would not take place during Christmas, he would still be feeling the affects and thus would not be able to enjoy the holidays as much as he wanted to. The Wolfsbane Potion that Snape had brewed to him with a slight relief, given the alternative and it allowed him to keep his mind, thus not taking his aggression out on the furniture in the room where he was going through his transformations in.

“Professor, are you in there?” asked the voice of Harry from outside of the office and Remus was caught off guard. While it was not curfew just yet, it was a bit late.

“Yes, I am Harry, please come in,” said Remus as he wondered what he had on his mind and he looked as he saw Elizabeth follow him inside, looking as if she really was unsure about whether or not she wanted to be there. “And Elizabeth, as well, this is an interesting surprise.”

“Professor Lupin,” responded Elizabeth in a cool, mostly indifferent voice. Remus surveyed her, perhaps it was a good thing that she was not shouting and other than classes, Elizabeth had pretty much gone out of her way not to interact with Lupin. It was hoped that time had given her enough time to calm down. “I want to ask you a question.”

“Of course, Elizabeth, do sit down, you too as well, Harry,” said Remus, who tried to maintain a balance of being professional, while letting Elizabeth know that he was there for her if she needed any help. “What do you need?”

“Two times I passed out when Dementors came across me,” said Elizabeth and Remus nodded, wincing slightly, as he remembered what happened. The hood was down and Elizabeth was this close to receiving a Dementor’s Kiss. “I don’t want that to ever happen again.”

“I can see that you wouldn’t,” said Remus, but he had motioned for Elizabeth to continue and she took a deep breath, with Harry lightly nudging her in the side, to encourage her to continue.

“You managed to scare those Dementors off on the train and in the hallway, Harry told me that if there was any way that if anyone who could teach me how to defend myself against them...I thought it might be you, Professor Lupin,” said Elizabeth, as if it caused her great strain to admit that she needed help. “So is there anything that you could teach me that might help me deal with them the next time, not that I’m intending there to be a next time, but if there is anything that you can do to help me I’d...be grateful.”

Elizabeth looked at Lupin, who looked thoughtful and a bit reluctant, as if he was thinking quickly.

“Well there are methods that can hold off the Dementors and in some cases drive them off,” responded Remus as he looked at Elizabeth. “It’s not anything that can be easily learned and I’m not an expert in the matter...”

“Please, cut the modesty, you know more about defending against the dark arts than any of those so called Ministry experts,” said Harry with a stern look and Remus looked at him.

“It’s not going to be easy, many Adult witches and wizards fail to learn the spell as well,” said Remus. “Perhaps you would be better off in...”

“Harry, this is a waste of time, I should have known better than counting on him for anything,” said Elizabeth, with a bit of a sullen expression on her face and Remus looked at her. Despite the fact that he listened to Dumbledore and precautions made to keep him away from her, he still could do this, to perhaps make up for what happened. It was pure luck that he came across the Dementors before they did lasting damage to Elizabeth and he doubted he would have that luck a third time.

“No, I wasn’t saying anything about not teaching you, it’s just difficult to learn and it will take a lot of hard work to even make any progress, it is something that...” stated Remus.

“I know, many adult witches and wizards fail to do,” said Elizabeth, but this fact gave her incentive to learn this piece of magic, more so they not being weak around Dementors again. “I don’t care how hard it is, I won’t be caught up by the Dementors again.”

“I can see your point, but a couple of weeks after the holidays are the best time we need to start,” said Remus as he looked to Harry. “I suppose you want to learn as well, Harry.”

“Of course, I do, never hurts to have a back up wand if something happens,” said Harry.

“Very well then,” said Remus. “I’ll let you know of a good time for me to teach you two after the holidays.”

“Looking forward to it,” said Harry, as Elizabeth nodded at his sides. “It looks like you have a lot to do; we’ll get out of your way.”

“More than you could ever imagine,” muttered Remus as he watched the twins leave. He now had something else to think about, how to teach a pair of thirteen year olds the Patronus Charm and not only that, but doing so without the aid of the Dementor.

Next chapter should be an interesting one. A bit of Christmas time festivities and Patronus lessons, along with some things including some Bellatrix related bloodshed. Then a transitional chapter or two, before we get to the chaos that is the end of the year, that will be the first step to pretty much every other major plot point that takes place during the rest of this story. We might even sit a bit of a certain Dark Lord all too soon.

Also, while she temporarily wormed her way out of trouble in this chapter, Dolores Umbridge’s actions will come back to haunt her in the most horrifying way possible before too long. Well horrifying for her and quite amusing for us but you get the picture.

## Chapter Twenty Three: Passage of Time:

Lucius Malfoy had several clippings of the Daily Prophet hanging in his study, all detailing the deaths of members of the Council of Blood Purity. He ran across one of the remaining members of the Council, who looked terrified, but tried to say he was not afraid of Bellatrix. The fact he was hiding in a heavily warded room in a house surrounded by security trolls, with a Muggle shotgun, suggested that he might be a bit more terrified. Lucius had upgraded the security on Malfoy Manor, there was no need to be careless. Bellatrix had come to him once and he was not going to risk anything. He looked at the latest edition of Daily Prophet, the Ministry spending hundreds of Galleons to secure the respected members of their pureblood community. Of course, those were not the people that Bellatrix were after with a few exceptions.

Lucius walked over to complete a letter he had to send to the Minister of Magic. Fudge had wanted his opinion on several issues and naturally Lucius was happy to give him some advice that would point the Minister in the proper direction, especially if it pointed the Minister in the right direction. He then needed to arrange a meeting with Harry Black, he still had plans for the boy and he would be a useful tool to further extend his power within the Ministry of Magic. One could never have enough power and Lucius planned to pull most of the important strings in the Ministry before it was all said and done.

-

“Just six more months and I’ll finally be a full fledged Auror,” said Nymphadora to Harry, Elizabeth, and her mother, at the table a couple more days.

“The last six months are the most difficult aren’t they?” asked Elizabeth.

“Of course they are, they want to make sure we are prime Auror material,” said Nymphadora who looked a bit nervous. “Scrimgeour is putting us through the paces lately and Moody has a say in the final exam, before we are qualified, he’s always a joy. They say that you

leave the training in two ways. In tears or sore, but qualified to be an Auror. Then the real fun begins.”

“The rumors aren’t true are they?” asked Andromeda to her daughter, with a concerned look on her face. “They aren’t using trainee Aurors to babysit those purebloods are they?”

“They are, but I’m not one of them, at least not yet, I have the task of standing guard outside of the Minister’s office from noon to three o’clock,” said Nymphadora. “Quite boring if I do say so myself and Scrimgeour seems annoyed that he has to lose Aurors to babysitting Fudge, so he’s giving him trainees and the troublemakers who are on their way out. The Minister is at ease though, I guess all he needs is a warm body to stand in front of him when the curses start flying.”

“That’s not really making me feel better,” said Andromeda but Nymphadora just shrugged.

“The actual security around the Ministry is good, even if the people running it sometimes aren’t, don’t worry Mum, I’m fine, I’ve made it this far in a profession that a lot of people failed at,” said Nymphadora in a reassuring voice before she turned to the twins. “Enough about how I’ve been lately, there haven’t been any more problems at the school for you.”

“No there hasn’t been,” answered Harry. “The two Dementor attacks and that’s about it, there should not have been any more. McGonagall was on the war path, both of these inspections were never cleared with her apparently.”

“The Ministry’s trying to cover up that the suggestion to inspect the castle during that weekend came right from the office of the Minister of Magic, in fact from his Senior Undersecretary, Dolores Umbridge,” said Nymphadora. “She’s a piece of nasty work that one, she tries to act like she’s your friend but you tend to get the sense she’s plotting against you at all times. She also tends to be unhealthily interested in you Elizabeth, she played a roll in pushing back the custody hearing for you as far as possible, no doubt she wanted to find some



evidence that would blacken your character enough to cause the Wizengamot to vote you back to the Dursleys.”

“I’ve never even met this woman,” said Elizabeth. “What could I have done to make her so venomous against me? She wasn’t a former Death Eater.”

“As far as I know, Dolores Umbridge was never accused of being a Death Eater, and she doesn’t seem like the type to be one, she tends to be the type to hurt people legally, not get the blood on her hands and if she does, she makes sure the blood is on the hands of other people,” said Andromeda with a sigh. “

Just like she did with Dawlish, a high ranking Auror, she suggested that he have the Dementors inspect the castle on Hogsmeade weekend, implying that most of the students would be in the village and all of the students who weren’t would be in their dormitories,” added Nymphadora Then when the near incident with Elizabeth almost being kissed happened, she backtracked, claiming it was a false lead and she had sent a letter to Dawlish that he had never received. Given the fact that she is a high ranking Ministry official, working directly with the Ministry of Magic himself, I guess you could tell who was believed in that situation. Dawlish has been put on probation and house arrest, pending a further investigation and Scrimgeour gave us an hour lecture about making sure that orders are legit and plans have not changed before undergoing a message.”

“Charming, I’d imagine,” said Harry dryly but Elizabeth looked concerned.

“This Umbridge woman could be a problem,” said Elizabeth and Andromeda nodded in agreement. She had been a problem with years, managing to work her way up from pretty much the bottom to the position of Senior Undersecretary of the Minister of Magic, mostly though blackmail if half the stories were true.

“One that we’ll deal with when the time comes, but there are more important things,” said Harry and Andromeda looked curious at this. “Professor Lupin had agreed to teach us how to defend ourselves

against Dementors, because if another incident happens again, no one might be around to save us.”

“I was going to write him to ask, but I’m glad you two thought to ask as well,” said Andromeda. “Now enough about that nasty business, time for dinner.”

-

“Lucius seems rather intent of taking you under his wing,” said Ginny in amusement, as she talked with Harry on the other side of the Floo Network. “You mean he mentioned that once Lestrage gets caught or the proper security gets arranged, he will take you to meet the Minister of Magic himself.”

“Yes, including that delightful woman, Dolores Umbridge, who is well connected,” said Harry as he pulled a face at the thought of that woman, who seemed to want Elizabeth out of the picture. “Draco mentioned that his father doesn’t do favors lightly, unless he wants something in return and he’s always making comments that Draco should be more ambitious. I’m slightly regretting that I had to take down Dumbledore with Lucius Malfoy in the room, now he thinks I have the potential to be some political schemer.”

“You did what you had to do,” said Ginny as she sighed. “Something about Lucius Malfoy, even though I’ve only met him once at that party and seen him a couple of times, he looks like he’s always up to something...”

“Maybe because he’s always up to something,” said Harry and Ginny nodded. “Draco basically said the same thing and let’s face it, if anyone should know it would be him, the man is his father.”

“Yes, just watch your step and what you say around him, if he’s half as crafty as people say he is, he can use it against you later on,” remarked Ginny and Harry nodded. “So Lupin’s going to teach you two how to defend against Dementors.”

“Yes, I figure there would be no reason for him to tell us no, especially considering the guilt trip he must be on after Lizzie tore into him,” said Harry and Ginny just had a bit of a smile.

“Truthfully he had no excuse, if I was her, I’d be furious as well,” remarked Ginny. “He just took Dumbledore’s word for it. At one time, Dumbledore was perhaps what people think he is but age has slowed him down, made him a bit less impressive than he was. I’m sure he’s still a wizard, it’s just he’s so used to having everything go his way for so long and having everything go the right way, that it’s made him a shadow of his former self.”

“Not to mention the fact that Dumbledore has been put on a pedestal that no human being, no matter how good they are, could match,” said Harry. “It’s not like I’m saying the man is a bad wizard, far from it, it’s just his sense of judgment has not been the best lately. He tried to play these games with Elizabeth and maybe our parents, suggesting the entire Secret Keeper scheme that got them killed. Why he thought Voldemort would come after us is something that I’d never been able to figure out?”

“I’m sure Dumbledore will let you know when the time is right,” remarked Ginny with a sigh.

“Who knows when that will be, Dumbledore’s dropped off the map right now and he lost the Dursley card anyway, thanks to our crazed Azkaban escapee,” said Harry who was now worried about another thing. “Still at large and Mum’s a bit of a nervous wreck, even though she doesn’t show it.”

“Well I would be too given the circumstances...just a minute Harry,” said Ginny as she turned away from the Floo for a brief second and Harry waited, tapping his finger on the side of the fireplace. He wished the Wizarding World had embraced the telephone, it was much easier than getting down on his knees to talk someone and Ginny returned. “Luna’s come over, she says hi.”

“Hi Luna!” called Harry, loud enough for his other friend to hear and Ginny looked at him. “I’ll let you go, lunch should be happening in a

couple of minutes anyway and I'll see you both in a couple of days anyway on Christmas Eve."

"If I can find a way to convince Mum to let me out of the house with Lestranger on the loose," said Ginny and Harry nodded. Molly Weasley was a bit smothering towards her children, even though the woman meant well. "If not, I'll talk to you later."

"Looking forward to it Ginny, good bye," responded Harry.

"Bye Harry, talk to you later," said Ginny as both of them pulled themselves out of the Floo and Elizabeth was standing in the doorway, with a smile on her face as she looked at Harry.

"Talking to Ginny I see," said Elizabeth. "You were in there for the last hour, I've been calling your name."

"Yes, didn't realize it's that long, I suppose it's lunch time already," said Harry and Elizabeth nodded, before they walked down the stairs together, with Harry briefly filling her in on the details of his conversation with Ginny over the Floo.

-

"Draco, have you written to your cousin, telling him that he is welcomed over here on Christmas Eve for the party?" asked Narcissa and Draco did a double take.

"I've been asking to invite Harry every year since I met him and Father said I shouldn't bother, there would not be enough room for him," said Draco, as even during Christmas, his father was hard at work at trying to extend his influence in the Ministry, by spreading Christmas cheer in the form of mass bribery. "Harry's mentioned he has plans already anyway and I doubt that even Father could get him to drop them at this point."

"Your Father hasn't mentioned to you what his intentions are, regarding Harry, has he?" asked Narcissa abruptly and Draco did a double take. "I asked him and he said that it would be a shame that a

young man with such potential would not be properly guided and Lucius offered to give him the proper guidance.”

“No, Mother, I know about as little as you do,” said Draco, carefully choosing his words but his father had been rather secretive on this subject.

“With the members of the Council dropping right and left, you would think that Lucius would have better things to worry about,” responded Narcissa.

“The Council?” asked Draco and Narcissa felt she could have smacked herself, saying too much in front of her son, he was too young to worry about pureblood politics, despite Lucius wanting to teach him pretty much out of the womb.

“The Council of Blood Purity, a group developed to keep the Wizarding World safe from the influences of undesirables, being the head of an old pureblood family, your father is one of the charter members of the group and Bellatrix is...,” said Narcissa before she shook her head to clear it, having said a bit too much to Draco for her liking. “Don’t worry about it Draco, I would write to Harry though, to ask him to make sure, and do show your Father that the effort was made, as he does seem rather insistent that Harry attends this little gathering.”

“I’ll try but I can’t promise anything,” said Draco, as his father’s interest in Harry continued to increase. He intended to warn Harry to be on his guard but what his mother let slip intrigued him. It was not as simple as Bellatrix simply killing off acquitted Death Eaters, but something a bit deeper. Perhaps Draco was putting two and two together and getting five, but Draco had a theory that he was almost sure was right. He went to write to Harry, even though he knew what Harry’s answer would be. Still, he wanted to run his theory about the Council of Blood Purity, Bellatrix, and how it related to his father.

-

“More information that I need, I take it Dumbledore,” said Snape as he met Dumbledore in the Hog’s Head.

“More or less, I managed to talk with a contact I had within Gringotts and I found out some potentially distressing information on Elizabeth Potter’s trip to the bank,” said Dumbledore and Snape braced himself. “I didn’t want to reveal this information, but it’s necessary to do so to explain how grave this situation is. I trust you are aware of what Horcruxes are.”

“Yes,” answered Snape shortly but a sudden look of realization appeared on his face. “And the Dark Lord made one I take it.”

“One or more, Severus, but I’m unsure as to how many,” stated Dumbledore and Snape looked grave.

“It’s not recommended to make more than one, in every reference I have found about those vile creations,” said Snape. “It would explain several aspects of the Dark Lord’s personality.”

“Indeed Severus,” replied Dumbledore gravely. “Also, when I found which twin was the one determined by the prophecy, the biggest clue pointing towards the identity was a Horcrux found within the scar of young Elizabeth Potter...”

“You mean the girl has a Horcrux in her head,” said Snape.

“She did, but the goblins apparently have found a way to remove it,” said Dumbledore. “It was a rather sizeable piece, with a small bit of Voldemort still out there, most likely in Albania. I must admit, this complicates things.”

Snape just responded by staring back at Dumbledore. There was so much he felt he could say but he decided he was better off not saying it. After a moment or so of silence, Dumbledore decided to press on with a further explanation.

“Once Lord Voldemort returned to full power and unfortunately, it is more than inevitable no matter what I try to do, there was to be a

connect between Elizabeth and Lord Voldemort, that would be rather beneficial to her, even though I would try to encourage her to close her mind to him,” said Dumbledore.

“What if she did take your encouragement to heart and actually make an effort to close her mind to the influence of the Dark Lord?” questioned Snape.

“It would be impossible for her to do so but now since the goblins have removed the Horcrux from her head, another part of the overall picture has been wiped out, but we have a far more pressing problem,” said Dumbledore. “The goblins might have removed the Horcrux, but while they wanted to make Elizabeth believe it was destroyed, it was simply transferred from her scar to a container kept in a high security Gringotts vault.”

“Surely even the goblins would understand that keeping something that dangerous around is only asking for difficulties,” responded Snape but Dumbledore responded with a slight shake of his head, causing Snape to look at him.

“They understand the risks, but they see a potential resource as well,” commented Dumbledore. “Goblins are what they have been made by humanity and several goblin rebellions have made them very distrustful. While they have control of our gold now, it’s only a temporary arrangement. They know that the Ministry will try to find some way to force them to submit to them, breaking any agreement. Now, they have in their hands a piece of a wizard that many on in the Ministry fear and most even speak the name. Goblins might be blood thirsty but they have a great deal of knowledge and they might find a way to turn that piece of Voldemort they have into a weapon.”

“Would it be a weapon they can control?” asked Snape. “Those goblins are playing with fire as far as I’m concerned, it’s only going to come back and sting them in the long run.”

“We can only hope they have no reason to use this potentially unstable weapon on us,” said Dumbledore but he looked grave. “Bellatrix is still lurking out there and others like her would love to get

their hands on a large piece of the Dark Lord if an opportunity presented itself, to resurrect him and given what we've found out, it's coming. Whether it would be days, weeks, months, or even years, that's something that even the best of us could not predict."

"Surely there must be a way to get that piece of the Dark Lord away from the goblins and destroy it," said Snape.

"There are ways but none of them pleasant and I'm afraid the Ministry is something that can't really be relied on right now," said Dumbledore in a grave voice. "I do know this, dark days are coming, sooner than we think."

-

Dawlish sat right by the window, clutching the latest edition of the Daily Prophet, the usual grave news about Bellatrix Lestrange being at large and the Girl-Who-Lived being in danger. Over two months later, the Ministry were still investigating his actions. He had tried to tell him that he was only following orders, but Madam Umbridge had denied everything. She had claimed an owl was sent telling him the plans had changed and Dawlish felt miserable when he realized that a lost owl post might have sealed his fate. Until then, he was confined to his house, Aurors guarding him from the outside, making sure he did not make a run for it. The Ministry would hopefully get it over with. At the very least, he was looking at being blackballed from the Ministry for life and at the very worse, he was looking forward to a nice cushy cell in Azkaban, surrounded by some of the filth he helped put away.

Dawlish was brought out of the house by a decapitated head flying through his window. Blood splattered all over Dawlish, who got to his feet. He recognized it as the head of his Muggle neighbor and quickly prepared to defend himself but he was disarmed and thrown back against the wall. When he regained his bearings, he came face to face with the crazed face of Bellatrix Lestrange.

"You," hissed Dawlish.



“I understand you set Dementors on a castle full of children, thinking that I was there,” said Bellatrix and Dawlish nodded fearfully. Without his wand, he was nothing. “Really now, I’m not that hard to follow. Just follow the screams of terror, begging for the pain to stop.”

Dawlish looked at her.

“The Aurors on the outside how did you...” stated Dawlish.

“I violently knocked them unconscious, with severe brain trauma but they’ll live, as vegetables maybe, but they’ll still be alive,” said Bellatrix in an unconcerned voice. “You, on the other hand, have to die, for the crimes you’ve committed, putting all those lives in danger just to end one.”

“Like you have room to talk,” stated Dawlish.

“I am a murderous psychopath, I have an excuse,” hissed Bellatrix. “You’re an Auror, with the responsibility to protect people but at least you don’t disgust me as much as your partner in crime, Dolores Umbridge. That one has to die, just on mere principle. Perhaps I could be merciful and allow you to live.”

“Really?” asked Dawlish in a relieved voice.

“No,” replied Bellatrix curtly and a flick of her wand had snapped the man’s neck with ease. There was no reason to waste a perfectly good killing curse on the fall guy. Bellatrix then turned and left, with a sadistic, twisted grin on her face.

This was the perfect season for toad hunting.

And that’s the chapter. Back to Hogwarts after a bit of the fallout from the holidays, lessons with Remus, and more, as the third year will be winding down and then...the worst is yet to come.

## Chapter Twenty Four: Dissecting the Toad

“Every time I open the Daily Prophet, this Lestrangle thing just gets more...” stated Padma, as she struggled to find the correct words.

“Weird,” supplied Lisa as they sat on the train. “They’re sticking with their story, that Auror Dawlish getting killed...”

“The one that set the Dementors on Hogwarts, right?” asked Luna and Elizabeth responded with a nod.

“Yes, under the orders of Dolores Umbridge,” supplied Harry. “She’s a right piece of work that one, nasty enough, and right in the office of the Minister of Magic. I’ve researched her a bit, prides herself on blood superiority and not just that, but absolutely despises magical creatures, unless of course they can be used as tools to achieve her own ambitions.”

“Charming, I doubt this an accident,” said Lisa.

“Of course it’s not an accident, Umbridge doesn’t like me, I remember her now that I’ve seen a picture of her, she voted against me in the custody hearing, she seemed to have great joy in me being sent back to the Dursleys, especially after what she heard, and looked like someone shot her puppy when I just managed to win that case,” said Elizabeth. “Don’t know what I’ve could have done to her?”

“She’s afraid of you, Liz,” offered Lisa. “Afraid that you could bump her out of the Ministry if you decide to work there.”

“I agree, with your fame, you could get in the Ministry easily and even without it, your grades speak for themselves and not to mention you’re the heiress of an ancient pureblood magical family,” said Harry. “The Ministry is dominant by old heads of families and most of the heads of the families are wizards, very few witches get into prominent positions in the Ministry. Umbridge is one, Amelia Bones is another, a couple of females on the Wizengamot, but other than that, everything is most a wizard dominated environment. You on the other, savior against Lord Voldemort, even though you don’t like your fame, it can

get you in places that most people can't even walk onto the premises."

"So pureblood politics at work, that figures," said Padma. "Back to Lestrage, her motives are getting a bit more cloudy, it still says she's after Liz here, but call me crazy, I'm not even sure about that even more."

"Well her maybe getting information out of Dawlish about security is something that could point to that, but I doubt Dawlish would know much, he's a flunky," said Ginny. "Guess he could have stumbled upon something regarding Lestrage that he shouldn't have and he paid the price for that. Still, what is Lestrage up to?"

"Mother let something slip over the holidays that might hint at what she might be up to," said Draco as he arrived, causing the occupants of the compartment to snap their eyes towards them. "I doubt very much you have heard of something called the Council of Blood Purity."

"No, I can't say that I have," responded Harry with a frown, as he looked at Draco for clarification and the others looked equally confused, so Draco decided to elaborate on what he had found out.

"When according to Mother, they are a group that is dedicated to keeping the influence and power of the Wizarding World out of the hands of undesirables," said Draco before he paused. "I think we can figure out what that means in the circles my father hangs out with."

"Blood traitors, half bloods, and Muggle borns, yeah I get the picture," said Harry.

"But what does this have to do with Lestrage?" asked Ginny and Draco took a deep breath.

"I don't have any proof but my Father is a very ambitious person and the fact that all of the purebloods are dropping left and right, his competition for influence in the Wizarding World, if she was attacking Death Eaters who had claimed they were under the Imperius Curse,

Father would be on the top of the list, right underneath Snape,” said Draco. “Yet, it’s just these Council members, according to Mother, so perhaps Father sold them out but the question is why. He never does anything unless he has a reason.”

Draco took a breath, pausing, as if thinking. It was his Father, yet he had nothing that would point to exactly what his Father was up to, except it was another power play.

“That does not mean Bellatrix would pass up the chance in killing you if she had the chance,” said Draco seriously, looking at Elizabeth. “She was the most fanatical follower of the Dark Lord and she had many years inside that prison, to brood on what happened. To think of inventive ways to kill you and she got past a decent level of Ministry security to murder Dawlish. If given the right chance, she will kill you and not even hesitate in doing so.”

“I know, believe me, and I’ll be on my guard,” responded Elizabeth in a calm voice. Truthfully, this bothered her but she was just a bit more terrified of the Dementors than she was of Bellatrix. She had experienced what they could do to her and the horrible memories they could bring up first hand. Bellatrix, she only heard what that crazed witch could do second hand and thus it was only a secondary concern.

Still, she hoped that whatever Lupin taught her and Harry would help them combat the Dementors next time.

-

“So Madam Umbridge, given your storied pureblood lineage and high level Ministry seniority, do you feel yourself to be threatened by Bellatrix Lestrange’s current rampage?” asked Rita Skeeter with a smile, having slipped inside the Ministry.

“I wasn’t aware you were given clearance to enter the Ministry, Miss Skeeter,” said Umbridge in her sickly sweet tone of the voice, as she looked at the reporter. She wrote statements that put the Ministry in the worst possible light recently, having stated that they were

inadequate to protect a school of children, if they were unable to protect themselves. It was very bad, the Ministry needed to be followed without question and without criticism.

“Surely, you have time for a member of the press, Madam Umbridge,” said Rita with a smile, as she looked right at Umbridge, but the toad faced woman just turned, not even bothering. “Do you feel Bellatrix Lestrange is a threat to your life and health?”

“No,” replied Umbridge curtly. “I feel that the security protections around my family estate are more than adequate in dealing with Lestrange, but she is dangerous and unbalanced. The fact that she is attacking respected pillars of the pureblood society proves this. Once we capture her, she will be kissed. I would advise the public to allow the Ministry to do their jobs and not approach this woman under any circumstances.”

“If you are so confident in the protections around your family home, then why is it you have been spending so much time around the office at the Ministry of Magic, working eighteen and more hours a day?” asked Rita.

“I’m a dedicated Ministry employee and this is a time of crisis, surely there is no crime in that?” asked Umbridge calmly and Rita looked back at her with a nod, surveying the woman. Umbridge was getting very annoyed by Rita’s constant prodding. The reason she had been spending so much time within the Ministry was because that the protections around her home were being upgraded to being as nearly efficient as the Ministry. She had vital security details for the protections around Hogwarts and she did not know what Dawlish had spilled before Lestrange killed her. It was better to be safe than sorry.

“Of course not, Madam Umbridge,” said Rita after a pause, as she jotted down something, framing Umbridge’s comments into something a bit more colorful, that would add some intrigue and sell a few papers. “Thank you for your time, I appreciate having a perspective of a Ministry employee.”

“I’m sure you do,” said Umbridge as the woman left her office. She turned her attention to another werewolf restriction bill, that would protect the Wizarding World from the influence of those filthy beasts. They were required to be registered for the Ministry and tracked at all times, providing this bill got passed. Another provision was that ninety five percent of the gold as any jobs they have would be paid to the Ministry as a Werewolf tax. Also, the family estates of purebloods who had gotten themselves bitten would be seized and put towards further control of the werewolves. Her dream was to eliminate the disease, by eliminating the problem, but she had to force the issue by giving werewolves more and more excuses to attack normal people, thus increasing anti werewolf sentiment. It was unfortunate that the bill would be delayed a few weeks because of the chaos involving the Wizengamot members dying. That fact alone was the reason that Umbridge was going to take pleasure in Bellatrix Lestrange receiving the Dementor’s Kiss. The woman was ruining her agenda.

-

A couple of weeks after they had returned to school from Christmas, the Potter twins followed Remus to the History of Magic classroom, a place that Remus felt would be more than adequate to teach them what needed to be thought. He put a briefcase down on the desk, which rattled slightly, as Harry and Elizabeth turned to each other, waiting for Remus to elaborate on what he was going to do.

“Given your reaction with the Dementors, Elizabeth, I had a theory that I want to present to you,” said Remus and Elizabeth turned to Lupin, nodding her head, wondering what his theory was. She was rather curious. “You had told me that Lord Voldemort was not the thing you feared the most, but given your reaction to the Dementors, I wondered if I had been mistaken if the Dementors were the thing you feared the most.”

“I wouldn’t be surprised,” said Elizabeth calmly, the fact was that Lupin was on to something.

“I hoped so, because it would be difficult to do this training exercise otherwise,” commented Lupin and the twins looked at him, curiously.

The Defense Against the Dark Arts took a breath before he continued. "So, if your greatest fear is a Dementor, than the boggart that I had secured in my briefcase would turn into a Dementor, thus making it a viable target to practice the charm that I'm going to teach you. That is, if you're willing."

"Yes, I am," said Elizabeth in a firm voice, she was not going to be weak ever again, especially around those Dementors. Given how close she was to being finished off for good, there was no chance that she was going to be caught up once again and Harry looked at her, seeing the intense look on her face, determined and not willing to back down from what she wanted to do. Harry responded with a nod and Lupin looked at them both, before he nodded calmly.

"Alright then, but just a warning, this charm is well beyond Ordinary Wizarding Level and that's putting it mildly, it's something that even your average Auror has some difficulty in mastering," said Lupin. "It is called the Patronus Charm, it acts as a guardian and defends against Dementors, protecting you against their more sinister effects and perhaps a chance to escape."

"Now that I think of it, I heard it mentioned in passing once before, it's powered by positive emotions, the very thing that the Dementors despise," said Harry and Lupin responded with a nod, looking pleased.

"Very good Harry, I would award you points had this been an official lesson," said Remus as he looked at both of them. "Now the incantation to perform the Patronus Charm is, Expecto Patronum."

"Expecto Patronum," said Harry, as a shadow of silver mist appeared from his wand and Elizabeth got to her feet, copying her brother.

"Expecto Patronum," responded Elizabeth and a bit of mist appeared, a bit less prominent than Harry's but it was there and Remus looked at them.

“Good, now before you attempt this with a Dementor, I would like you to muster up the happiest memory you could think of,” responded Remus as he paused. “Before I release the boggart and have it turn its attention towards Elizabeth. Harry, you may want to stand back, so you do not confuse the boggart.”

“Right, Professor,” said Harry as he had a few memories but he watched Elizabeth in deep concentration. She was silent, almost as if she was dreading something.

Elizabeth stood there, in concentration, as finding a happy memory could be a problem. She had a few but very little to choose from and if she was figuring out what Lupin told her correctly, then it would be a proper memory. She attempted to figure out what would be best to use, then it hit her. The day she found out she would never have to return to the Dursleys, because they had been judged to be unfit guardians for any magical child. That was a good enough start, but it was the happiest memory that came to mind right now.

“Are you ready?” asked Harry and Elizabeth paused, a second of indecision, before she nodded slowly, with a growing look of confidence etched in her face, even though she was unsure exactly how good this memory would do her. She watched as Lupin turned to open the case, Harry stepping back to make sure the boggart did not have any sense he was there. The boggart left the case, forming into a Dementor. Elizabeth backed off, she felt the cold air filling the room, the mist and the Dementor swooped above her, as if sizing her up. She focused, she needed to do this, focused on the courtroom, trying to block out the hopelessness that was inspired by the Dementor that there was only one vote that could have swung the balance the other way but she held her wand, focusing on repelling the Dementor with all of her might.

“Expecto Patronum,” said Elizabeth as an instinct shadow appeared from her wand but she collapsed, with Lupin quickly conjuring a cushioned chair so she did not take the nasty spill. The Boggart Dementor swooped forward and from the other side, Harry decided to give it a try of his own.



“Expecto Patronum!” shouted Harry and a burst of silver light, a bit more thick than Elizabeth’s but still indistinguishable appeared right in front of the Dementor, backing it off, right towards the case, where Lupin snapped it shut with a flick of his wand, before he turned to the two. Harry sat down, he felt weak, but not as much as Elizabeth, who appeared a bit upset with herself for not creating a better Patronus on her first try. Harry put his arm around his sister, in an attempt to comfort her, as Lupin handed them a chocolate card a piece.

“Not bad for a first try, either of you,” said Lupin and Elizabeth just looked at him with a disbelieving look. “It’s difficult to do and I don’t want to put a strain on you...”

“I want to try again,” said Elizabeth in a firm voice. She was refusing to give up. The next time real Dementors attacked her, she wanted to be ready, no matter what. The look of conviction on her face, as she chewed the chocolate frog caused Lupin to just respond with a nod.

“Very well then, take a rest for a minute and then try again,” said Lupin as he sighed. If Elizabeth was anything like her mother, she would work herself into magical exhaustion until she perfected the charm. Then again James was like that as well, but not to the extent that Lily was, it was almost to the extent of being a fanatical perfectionist. “Now try for a stronger memory, something that might add a bit more form to the Patronus but don’t exert yourself too much. It is something that takes months to least form even the weakest corporeal Patronus.”

“I don’t have months,” stated Elizabeth through gritted teeth, but if Lupin heard her, he did not say anything. He just paused as Elizabeth got to her feet, a determined look on her face as she looked at the case, ready for anything. The day she met Harry, that seemed to be an good memory. He was the first person who did not treat her like something she scraped off the bottom of her shoe. Of course, the reason why was obvious, but the fact that she had a brother that cared for her and would always be there for her seemed like a good enough memory. She was ready to create a Patronus that would back it completely off. She braced herself, eyes closed as the crate opened. Harry slid back far enough.

The Dementor came right at her, but she was more prepared this time. With the memory pushed up to her head, she was not going to let the bad feelings that the Dementor was inspiring taint this one with bitterness.

“EXPECTO PATRONUM!” shouted Elizabeth forcefully and the Patronus appeared, more solid, but the shape could not be brought back. It lit up the room slightly and Lupin looked a bit intrigued, as the Patronus had backed the Boggart Dementor up so far that it caught a look at Lupin and twisted into the shape of the full moon.

“Ridikkulus,” stated Lupin and the moon faded, as he forced the Boggart into the briefcase as Harry looked at Elizabeth.

“That was really good, Lizzie,” said Harry and Elizabeth smiled, Harry’s opinion meant so much to her than anyone else who said she was a great witch simply because she was the Girl-Who-Lived.

“Yes that was great and I think that’s more than good enough tonight, a few more lessons at this rate and you may get it quicker than I had thought,” said Remus, who was impressed and each handed them a bar of chocolate. “The Dementor affects are still strong, even if they aren’t real, so eat the entire thing and get a good night’s rest. Both of you did really well and hopefully will be able to hold Dementors off for long enough to escape before long.”

The twins nodded, as they walked down the hallways, to saying good night, as they made their way to their respective dormitories.

-

Dolores Umbridge entered her home for the first time for more than a few minutes. The Ministry experts did a good job in protecting her house, warning her against intrusion. She walked in the house, with a smug expression on her face, as she sat down on a chair, magical ropes popped out of nowhere, securing her to a chair. She struggled before she went face to face with Dolores Umbridge.

“YOU!” shouted Umbridge as she stood face to face with Bellatrix Lestrange, who had a crazed look on her face as she stared down Umbridge. “This isn’t possible. How did you get inside without any of the alarms warning me?”

“You, my fine toady friend, charmed your house to warn you about entering the house through magical means,” said Bellatrix as she looked at Umbridge, face to face. Umbridge was staring right in those soulless sadistic eyes. “Of course, those magical alarms don’t work so well when someone walks in the front door. I’m actually shocked that the Senior Undersecretary of the Minister of Magic would not think of securing her front door. At least curse it so it takes my hand off when I try to open it, woman! That was a nice two thousand and five hundred galleons down the drain for security spells when your life is about to end.”

“You won’t get away with this, I’m the Senior Undersecretary of the Minister of Magic, you will untie me at once or...” stated Umbridge but Bellatrix silenced her with a flick of the wand.

“Or what? You’ll sentence me to life in Azkaban? Maybe put in the order for me to receive the Dementor’s Kiss? Oh, wait, that’s already happened, my mistake,” said Bellatrix with a cackle as she looked serious. “Dolores, the fact that some people think that you were ever a Death Eater, well it makes me violently ill, how could someone like you ever be considered to follow the Dark Lord? I mean, at least Crabbe and Goyle are a riot at parties. What do you bring to the table? You would have never been considered, even though your vendetta against werewolves proved to be quite useless. Other than that, you were nothing and what you did regarding the Dementors at Hogwarts, sealed your fate.”

“I have no idea what you’re talking about,” said Umbridge but Bellatrix whipped her wand and Umbridge screamed in pain. It was the magical equivalent of being slapped by a hand wrapped in razor wire.

“Do not insult my intelligence, you set the Dementors on young Miss Potter with an attempt to eliminate her,” said Bellatrix.

“I don’t know why you would care, you’re going to kill the girl anyway,” said Umbridge but another curse had caused her a great deal of pain.

“When I kill people, at least I do it face to face, instead of hiding behind the Minister of Magic,” said Bellatrix coldly. “The Ministry, the Daily Prophet, and everyone else thinks they have me figured out, they honestly think they deduced my plans. They couldn’t even begin to have guessed what I figured out when in that cold dark Azkaban cell. The collective brain trust of the Ministry couldn’t have put it together. I will give Dumbledore credit, he’s truly warped at an even a level that a lifetime in Azkaban could not even get to.”

“What have you figured out?” demanded Umbridge, who wondered what this woman thought she knew. She naturally thought she would find a way out of this. “Just let me go Lestrangle, I will find a way to get you out of the country, arrange your death to be faked, so you can get your freedom, anything you want, gold, just get me out of here.”

“People within the Ministry of Magic’s office bargaining with Death Eaters, I wonder what the voters would say,” said Bellatrix in amusement. “You seem to assume that you can buy me off or that I even want my freedom. If I wanted my freedom, I would have claimed that I was under the Imperius Curse years ago, just like half of the senior officials within the Ministry did and given the amount of gold to my name, you would have believed it, despite what I did to the Longbottoms.”

“What is it you want, Lestrangle?” asked Umbridge but Bellatrix had refused to answer. Instead her wand spun and several rings of purple light appeared. They blasted Umbridge, causing her to scream as her internal organs felt like they were being burned down to nothing, her flesh melted completely off the bone and blood splattered in every direction.

“See you in hell, Madam Umbridge,” said Bellatrix in a chilling voice, as she heard one last scream of pain, before Umbridge finally expired. It was amazing what those gifted with magic could live through.

The woman turned for a second, with a smirk on her face, before she deliberately set off the alarms and quickly took her leave. She wanted her handiwork to be discovered as soon as possible, there was no way that she would want anyone in the Ministry to think that Umbridge had just dropped off the face of the earth.

-

“No one is safe, Scrimgeour!” bellowed Fudge angrily. “Your Aurors are incompetent, you can’t capture one witch. Now she’s deliberating taunting us and my approval rating is dropping by the day, I can’t believe you would fail so much.”

“Yes, Minister, it’s my fault that Lestrage is still out and about,” said Scrimgeour, trying to keep the sarcasm out of his voice. “The Azkaban security might be the problem here...”

“What are you talking about, the Dementors have done an excellent job in keeping the prisoners in for years!” shouted Fudge, who looked seconds away from losing his mind. “Most of the prisoners go insane, before they lose the will to live...”

“Lestrage was already insane from what I heard and she embraced that fact, she wouldn’t be effective, I’m still unsure why she wasn’t given the Dementor’s Kiss to begin with,” said Scrimgeour.

“How should I know?” demanded Fudge. “I wasn’t the Minister during that time period. The fact remains that the longer she’s out, the more the Ministry is made to look completely inept. The woman needs to be captured before she does even more damage, she’s wiping out purebloods left and right.”

“I was under the impression that the Girl-Who-Lived was Lestrage’s target,” responded Scrimgeour.

“That was a reasonable expression at the time but right now, I’m beginning to doubt that’s the case,” said Fudge. “The Dementors will remain at Hogwarts for now, I’m planning to reduce the number of Aurors patrolling Hogsmeade, bringing it down to two per shift. We need to add security clearance for other high ranking Ministry officials and that means we need more Aurors available.”

“I’m already short staffed as it is, Minister, do you expect me to pull Aurors out of thin air?” asked Scrimgeour.

“Increase their working hours and reduce their time off, the old purebloods, whatever’s left of them anyway, are calling for my head,” said Fudge without taking a breath. “Bring Alastor Moody or any other Aurors out of retirement if you have to, offer them anything, but Lestrangle has to be placed into Azkaban before she ruins anymore lives. Dolores Umbridge was not the first and if this woman isn’t brought to justice soon, there will be no more purebloods to speak of.”

“A shame, Minister, I’ll see what I can manage,” said Scrimgeour.

“You better figure out something, Scrimgeour, or I’ll find someone who will,” said Fudge, who needed to meet with the Wizengamot in an attempt to get Dolores’s anti-werewolf laws passed before some dark creature loving nutter got them buried. It was what she would have wanted.

-

Months had passed, as it was well into Spring and exams were coming up in a couple of weeks. Bellatrix Lestrangle had faded from the news, as a new batch of werewolf legislation being passed through was the focus of the Daily Prophet on most days. There had been no more near fatal experiences regarding the Dementors and that was the way Elizabeth liked it. She hoped she never had to face those things ever again.

“Don’t be too hard on yourself, your Patronus is about as good as can be expected,” said Harry to Elizabeth one morning as they went

down to Breakfast. "You never know, you might surprise yourself if you come face to face with an actual Dementor."

"I know or I'll freeze up," said Elizabeth before she shook her head. "Really wish I knew it was..."

"Same here, but Remus said we're doing better than expected," answered Harry. "This is our last lesson, exams are coming up soon and..."

"Shouldn't be too hard, a few extra exams to prepare for but really nothing big, of course taking good notes and actually paying attention in class goes a long way," responded Elizabeth. "We're be the top two students of the year again Harry, don't worry."

"You know, it's an interesting change of pace for you telling me not to worry about something," said Harry and the twins laughed as they walked to breakfast, where Draco was standing right in front of them, looking at Harry.

"Harry, as you know, my Father has been writing to me recently a lot, trying to arrange a meeting between you and him," said Draco and Harry responded with a calm nod. "He is rather insistent, this time, and Hogsmeade Weekend is the day after exams finished. I think he's at the point where he won't accept excuses anymore."

"Great," responded Harry, meeting with Lucius Malfoy was the last thing he wanted to do when he was half brain dead from exams. A meeting with someone like that meant he had to be on his toes at all times and ready for anything. "Did you tell him that I had to be in the castle because Lestrage is on the loose?"

"Yes, but he said he would have arrange to have an Auror guard to escort you from the school to the Hog's Head for the meeting and then back at the end of the day," said Draco as he looked a bit put off. "Father says all the precautions will be taken and it will be a couple of hours. There should be no reason why you can't go, according to him."

Harry and Elizabeth exchanged looks. Right at this time, Harry really regretted putting Dumbledore in his place.

“Your Father’s interest of Harry is getting borderline disturbing you know,” said Luna calmly, as she showed up with Ginny.

“Too bad restraining orders don’t exist in the Wizarding World,” said Elizabeth as she looked at Harry.

“You know Harry, you don’t really have to go, it’s not like Lucius is your parent or guardian,” said Ginny and Draco just looked at her.

“No, Ginny, Harry doesn’t have to go, but you have met my Father and I think even you can agree that he tends to make people believe that it is in their best interests to do what he asks,” said Draco. “A bit of gold here and there never hurts, but I think Father won’t accept an excuse this time. “

“Stuck I guess,” said Ginny. “Don’t worry Harry, you fought vampires and a Basilisk, I think you can handle Lucius Malfoy.”

“Guess I have no choice,” said Harry, who crossed his fingers for Bellatrix causing enough havoc within the next few weeks to shut down the entire trip, anything to get him away from this meeting.

“Of course you have a choice Harry, but I think you should really find out with he’s up to anyway,” said Luna as the others nodded.

“Good luck, I’ve been trying to figure that out for fourteen years,” said Draco in a bored voice.

-

Lucius Malfoy read the latest edition of the Daily Prophet with a tired, but satisfied expression. Another pureblood death and unless he was mistaken, the Council of Blood Purity had been wiped out. He would reestablish the Council under people he could control and he would be the leader. Over the past few weeks, he had spent most of his time at the Ministry, as Fudge was getting closer and closer to having



a meltdown of epic proportions based on the fact that they could not capture Bellatrix Lestrange. He had to hand it to his insane sister-in-law, she made the Ministry look even more incompetent than they have in the past.

An owl fluttered into the window and Lucius removed the envelope without really thinking. He still had plans for Harry Black and arranged a guard so the boy would feel safe and secure. It was understandable but Lucius was not going to let a murderous lunatic get in the way of his plans. Tomorrow was Hogsmeade weekend and he could make plans to guide the boy during the summer months, while hopefully inspiring his own heir to take a bit more ambition. Lucius had learned by now not to keep his eggs all in one basket.

He opened the letter and it was short and to the point.

If you are reading this, you may soon be dead.

Lucius then felt a pull and he cursed himself. He had fallen for the oldest trick in the book, used by Death Eaters to capture enemies during the height of the Dark Lord's power. He dropped down, having been transported by a Portkey. Lucius looked around, unless he was mistaken, he was in the Shrieking Shack.

"Then there was one and soon there will be none!" cackled an insane voice as Lucius felt himself knocked unconscious by a spell hitting the back of his head. Bellatrix Lestrange stepped forward, looking down at Lucius's falling body, bounding and gagging his unconscious form. She had to work quickly for her plans to come to pass, as the full moon was only tomorrow night and it was essential to her ultimate revenge.

And the chapter ends on that note. Next chapter, all hell begins to break loose.

## Chapter Twenty Five: All Hell Breaks Loose.

Hogsmeade weekend approached quicker than anyone could imagine. Most of the students in the school were glad, those who could go could get out of the castle for a few hours, and stretch their legs, something that they had little time to do considering the fact that exams occurred just last week.

“Right on schedule,” said Harry in a disappointed voice, as he waited with Draco outside, where a quartet of surly looking Aurors walked towards them. It looked like they wished to do anything but be babysitting a couple of school children. Yet, they assumed business like tones as they reached the school and turned to Draco and Harry.

“Mr. Malfoy, Mr. Black, this way if you please,” responded the leader Auror calmly as they went into the village. Students were chatting merrily, paying little mind to anyone in the village. Harry and Draco walked towards the village, not saying two words to each other, as the Aurors walked on either side of them, wands drawn, as if they were expecting something to leap out behind a bush. Then again, given what had happened involving Bellatrix Lestrange lately, Harry would not be surprised at all. Within about fifteen minutes, they made it from the school, all the way to the Hog’s Head. Both of them walked in to a bar with the shadiest individuals imaginable, and a bar tender with a scowl on his face that bared a passing resemblance to Dumbledore. He disappeared behind the counter, as the Aurors escorted Harry and Draco towards the table, where Lucius Malfoy was sitting, with a wide smile on his face.

“Good afternoon, boys,” said Lucius brightly, which caused Draco to do a double take, looking at his father as if he had grown two heads. Lucius got to his feet, looking at them. “Go take a leave for a few hours, I will summon you when the boys need to be taken back to the school.”

The Aurors nodded, they looked happy to be relieved, as Harry and Draco sat down on the table, in front of Lucius, who looked at them.

“Thank you for coming today, I appreciate it more than you ever know,” said Lucius and Draco got to his feet immediately, pointing his wand at Lucius.

“You’re not my father,” hissed Draco and Lucius looked at him, a look of innocence but one that Draco was not buying this for one second. “My father is never this polite...”

“Very good Draco, here have a medal,” said the imposter, as two objects were shoved in the hands of Harry and Draco before they could react. A tug and they found themselves inside the Shrieking Shack in the blink of an eye. Both of them crashed down to the ground. Draco turned around immediately and was knocked right off of his feet, hitting the wall, a banishing spell having knocked him completely unconscious. Harry, with quicker reflexes, blocked the shot, before the fake Lucius Malfoy turned around, with a smile appearing on the face.

“So you decided to impersonate Malfoy, why?” asked Harry, but a cutting curse blasted through the air towards his shoulder. Harry decided the best practice was to move out of the way and the spell bounced off the wall. Several more spells fired right at Harry at rapid fire succession and it was difficult to avoid them. He was a thirteen year old wizard, better than most sure, but the fact that he was going up against a master duelist skewed the odds towards his opponent’s favor. A levitated table managed to block a curse but the table was shattered into toothpicks. He dodged, ducked, trying to maneuver himself behind anything that could block the curse, while looking for an exit. Of course, he doubted he was going to be allowed to leave alive but it was worth a try. He fired back with a stinging hex, but it was blocked immediately. So was his stunning spell, and he read of stronger spells that he could use, but had never practiced it. His opponent was actually amused, as he saw the blond hair of Lucius Malfoy turning black and some feminine features appearing.

“I’ve figured you would be a decent enough opponent, but I’m the Dark Lord’s most trusted, most faithful servant, he trained me personally and...” stated a female voice Harry true a mild bone shattering hex right towards his opponent, as more of the Polyjuice

Potion appeared to wear off and Harry saw a face that was featured in almost every paper in the last year.

“Lestrangle!” shouted Harry, as he fought with more urgency. All things considered, he should have known, and the crazed dark witch nodded. A levitated chair blocked another curse, even though the chair was of no use to anyone anymore. He banished some debris at his opponent but they were vanished.

“So, you’ve guessed it was me, I must admit, it’s nice when all of the pieces of an extremely convoluted plan fall together,” said Bellatrix as she threw more spells, with Harry finding it more difficult to block her assaults. “Ah, what’s the matter? Is the ickle baby getting tired?”

“NO!” shouted Harry, hoping his voice would attract someone, a loud crash of a chair that had to echo throughout the village, but Bellatrix looked at him, with a sadistic smirk in her face, a purple light just missing from Harry.

“I hope you weren’t trying to attract attention, because I put silencing charms on the walls and disorientating spells around the windows and doors, anyone wanting to take a peak inside will be sickened and have a sudden urge to throw up,” responded Bellatrix with a cackle, as she deflected Harry’s attempt a spell with a breeze, before he was blasted backwards. Harry attempted to fight back but he found it very difficult to do so, given the fact he lost his wand. He attempted to get out the way, but he was knocked off of his feet. He felt the air leave his lungs briefly, he was unable to believe, before Bellatrix blasted ropes around him. They were tightly wrapped around him and Harry found it very hard to move.

“What do you want with me?” demanded Harry and Bellatrix just smiled a sadistic smile. The fact she was not blinking unnerved Harry and she stared at Harry, studying him intently, humming under her breath.

“As if you didn’t know,” responded Bellatrix as she looked at Harry, holding her fingernail up, as if she was contemplating on whether or

not she wanted to gouge Harry's eye out with her fingernail. It appeared to be very tempted.

"No, actually it is very obvious, now that I think of it," responded Harry as Bellatrix looked at him, through the shadows. "You are completely and utterly out of your mind if you think this will work!"

"First of all, I am completely and utterly out of my mind, but it is for reasons apart from thinking that this little scheme of mine will work," said Bellatrix, as she looked at the secured wizard.

"I'm telling you, Elizabeth is too smart to fall for such an obvious attempt to trap her!" shouted Harry and Bellatrix raised an eyebrow slightly, before she responded with very loud cackles. She was almost rolling on the ground, laughing, as she struggled to look at Harry, almost amused at his outburst.

"You really think I'm after the Girl-Who-Lived," said Bellatrix, using Elizabeth's imposed title with a heavy dose of sarcasm. "No, unlike the rest of the world, I figured it out. You see, I know my sister, I love to keep tabs on the little blood traitor. I know her family. I might have killed her husband, but the Mudblood deserved it. Still, I know they had a daughter, a cute little Metamorphmagus with an utterly appalling name. She was an only child."

Harry looked at Bellatrix, whose sinister smile only broadened.

"Let me spell it out for you sane people," said Bellatrix as she looked at Harry. "Hi, I'm Bellatrix Lestrange, you're Harry Potter, not Harry Black, the supposed dead twin of the alleged Girl-Who-Lived. Either you got better or Dumbledore had your death faked, with a blood adoption ritual to erase all traces of Harry Potter from existence. It makes perfect sense, as much as it pains me to say it and it does confirm some theories I have had for a while."

"What theories?" asked Harry through gritted teeth, he doubted it would do him any good to deny what he really was and it was amazing that more people did not figure it out. Then again, the

Wizarding World was never the type to look for complex explanations to anything.

“Elizabeth Potter was a completely elaborate hoax, there was no Girl-Who-Lived, Dumbledore is far too cunning to announce to the world who the real savior is, he should have been in Slytherin, with what he did, he threw the proclaimed savior into the Muggle World, while the real savior was hidden in the Wizarding World, in a somewhat respectable pureblood family,” said Bellatrix. “In essence, Elizabeth Potter didn’t manage to fluke her way into victory against the Dark Lord, you did, Harry!”

“What proof do you have?” asked Harry.

“Harry, Harry, Harry, as much as I would like it to be your twin sister, it just simply isn’t possible,” responded Bellatrix. “She got herself beaten by Muggles. If she was really defeated the Dark Lord, they would be turned into insects within a second so they could be stomped on. You, on the other hand, are the Boy-Who-Lived, whether you wish to admit so or not. Dumbledore has played an interesting game, I’m sure he was going to reveal the ruse at the worst possible moment, so he can maneuver you as he pleases. Dumbledore can even disturb me on occasion”

Bellatrix paused, looking at Harry with a malignant look in her eyes.

“That is not to say that Elizabeth doesn’t have potential, in fact, when I kill my sister and her daughter, I will help her unlock it, sure, it may take an Imperius Curse or two to get her to come along, but it will be worth it, she will help me bring back the Dark Lord,” said Bellatrix before she paused. “But, I’m getting ahead of myself; I only have a few hours before my plan can truly be set into motion.”

“Just get it over with and kill me,” said Harry and Bellatrix just looked at him, with a nod and a smile.

“Patience, Harry, patience, I still have a few more pieces to the puzzle to put together and then you’ll die, just like you asked,” said Bellatrix with a sinister smile, as the two unconscious Malfoys were

set up on either side, as Bellatrix removed a folded up piece of parchment, tying it to an owl, that she promptly set up to the school. Soon, everything would be in its proper place.

-

Elizabeth walked the hallways, anxiously. She had a bad feeling that she could not shake. Most of the students had returned to Hogsmeade and Harry was not among them. Neither was Draco and Elizabeth had hoped she missed him. She tapped her feet, checking the Marauder's Map, scanning over it, but found nothing. Not even the slightest hint that they were on the school grounds. She was not even really watching where she was going, as she nearly bumped into Ginny.

"Oh, hey, Ginny," said Elizabeth. "Have you seen Harry?"

"I was hoping to ask you the same thing, he hasn't returned from his meeting with Malfoy yet, Draco's not back either," said Ginny, as her eyes darted to the Great Hall doors, hoping to see that Harry had been delayed but there had been no movement from the village. Not even the slightest hint that her friends have come back. "You don't suppose something might have happened, do you?"

"I hope not, but I do have a bad feeling about this," responded Elizabeth, as she looked at the Marauder's Map, but she saw a dot move quickly. Remus Lupin was moving towards Snape's office rather quickly. She turned to Ginny. "This is odd, why is Lupin heading towards Snape's office in such a hurry, especially when..."

"When what?" asked Ginny curiously but Elizabeth stared at the Map.

"I'm going to go take a look at it, the Invisibility Cloak is in my bag, just let me get it," muttered Elizabeth to herself and Ginny followed, sticking close to her friend, as if by some unspoken agreement, as they pulled the Cloak over themselves when they were in an empty corridor, as they saw Lupin and Snape talking, both in anxious tones of voice.

“I’m just showing you what I received, Severus,” said Remus in a slightly anxious voice, as he held the parchment. “As you can see...”

“I know what it says, Lupin, I am perfectly capable of reading,” said Snape shortly, but he read the letter. “I don’t think I have to tell you this is a trap but Lestrangle would be the type to use realistic bait.”

“Of course, and if they are in danger, we need to get help to rescue them,” said Remus but Snape just responded, by shaking his head.

“No, she made it clear that she would only meet with you or I, a very suspicious claim, but she would kill them both if one other person other than us stepped inside that Shack,” responded Snape in a calm voice. “As much as I loath acting like a mindless Gryffindor, rushing into a situation, the fact is that Lestrangle has both of us by the throat for this situation.”

“I’m afraid you’re right, Severus,” said Lupin as he looked around, making sure that no one was following him but he saw no one. He could have sworn they heard something. “When...”

“Straight away, while we won’t be missed, if we are lucky we can catch Lestrangle by surprise, going in the back entrance, I don’t think she knows that way in and between the two of us, she might not be as lucky as she has been previously,” responded Snape but this was more hopeful than any confidence that he had. Snape and Lupin moved carefully, not wanting anyone to follow them and underneath the Invisibility Cloak, Elizabeth and Ginny moved carefully. They both felt nervous as it did not take a rocket scientist to figure out who Lestrangle had been holding. They decided it would best to tag along, hidden underneath the Invisibility Cloak, to see what was up.

-

Bellatrix tapped her fingers anxiously on the desk, as the secured forms of Harry, Draco, and Lucius were right by each other. The two Malfoys were groggy, just beginning to awaken, after Bellatrix had lifted the stunning spells.



“Excellent, you’re awake, I want to you to not die peacefully in your sleep,” said Bellatrix as she looked at Lucius, who struggled. “You couldn’t break free from those restraints even if you had your wands. They are impervious to magic and the only way to get them out once they’re on is to slice them.”

“I demand you to release me at once, you promised that I would be allowed to live,” hissed Lucius, in an attempt to disguise his misdeeds from his son and Harry.

“I never said for how long, Lucius,” responded Bellatrix as she rolled her eyes. “Beside, I’m just doing what you asked.”

“I never asked you to kill me, just eliminate the Council,” said Lucius.

“Ah, but you were merely suspended from participation in Council of Blood Purity meetings, but you have never removed, you wanted the Council eliminated and you’re the last person I need to kill to make that so,” said Bellatrix. “Aren’t you going to praise me for the good job I’ve done?”

“You’re a demented lunatic who deserves to have your soul sucked out of you and your remains fed to a dragon!” shouted Lucius angrily and Bellatrix just responded with a smile.

“Thank you, Lucius, that’s the nicest thing I’ve ever heard you say about me or anyone else,” said Bellatrix as a creak was heard from behind them. “Snape and Lupin have arrived on schedule, thinking they could sneak up on me, of course, not realizing that I made sure I knew every entrance in this place. I think I should teach them that there is a difference between insanity and stupidity.”

Bellatrix spun around, as she saw the face of Severus Snape right across from her. Snape blocked an attempted spell, playing everything cautiously, as he knew what Lestrangle was capable of. Several spells collided against each other, two blasts of light connecting, as Lupin moved from the other side, attempting to take Lestrangle out with a puncturing curse but she blocked that. A chair

was flung right into Snape but the former Death Eater blasted it out of the way. Bellatrix ducked and dodged, countering all attempts to put her down and out with ease, before she slid over and put the wand to Harry's head.

"Drop your wands, right now, or I will take a little bit off the top of young Harry, namely his head," cackled Bellatrix and the two wizards turned. Snape was debating on whether to attempt to stun Bellatrix quickly. The fact remained, even if they did surrender their wands, there was still a chance that Bellatrix could kill the boy. "You have ten seconds to do so, otherwise...well you get the picture."

Lupin dropped the wand first. What else could he do? Snape looked, judging the situation before he dropped the wand, very reluctantly. He hoped that Bellatrix would withdraw just enough for him to quickly pick up his wand, but she held another wand, one from her captives. Several ropes blasted around Snape and Lupin, wrapping them up tightly. Snape was levitated into the air high as Bellatrix took pleasure in crashing him down right next to Lucius Malfoy.

"Exactly how did you get into this mess, Lucius?" asked Snape.

"It is a long story, Severus," said Lucius, as he tried to free himself but found nothing that he could use. Bellatrix had placed all of their wands a table where they could see them but that was out of reach.

"Which, unfortunately, we don't have time to tell, as the moon will come up in five minutes, a bit more or a bit less maybe," said Bellatrix who looked excited. "Those ropes, no human can free themselves, but a fully transformed werewolf, they'll really have no problem in breaking out."

"You're mad," said Severus.

"Thank you," responded Bellatrix brightly. "It wasn't easy, there was so much that could go wrong but I had to make you pay over everyone else Snape. Harry knows why he's here, Lucius does as well, and I'm sure someone of your intellect could guess why you

have been sentenced to be mauled to death by a full transformed werewolf.”

“What am I doing here?” asked Draco. “I’m your nephew!”

“I know,” responded Bellatrix, as if she was saddened by the fact. “You’ll die because you are a weak pound of flesh that was spawned by that thing sitting on the other side of you. Narcissa, I’m sure, will do better next time.”

Bellatrix paused, before she turned to Remus, with a slightly apologetic, if demented, look on her face.

“ Nothing personal against you Lupin, but you were the only werewolf that was readily available for my plan,” said Bellatrix as she turned, as Snape attempted to find a flaw in the ropes, but he found it hopeless. Bellatrix walked out, without a backgrounds glance.

“Lupin, please tell me that you took the dose of the potion tonight,” said Snape.

“No, I was going to before I received the letter from Lestrage, more pressing matters and then...” said Lupin. “I wonder what an incomplete dose of Wolfsbane would do.”

“It’s not an experiment I want to be close to, if my theory is correct,” responded Snape, as he attempted to twist out, but nothing. Not even a pull, no weaknesses, no flaws, nothing that could free him.

“Lupin’s a werewolf and tonight’s the full moon, this is just a perfect day” said Draco in a horrified voice as he looked at Harry, who leaned back. “Those ropes are tight, there’s no way out.”

“I’m trying to find a way out and besides, it’s not over to the fat lady sings,” muttered Harry.

“It will be over once the werewolf howls, Black,” responded Snape as he looked at Lupin, who hoped for a miracle, but Harry was twisting, the table was in reach, but he spotted something.

“Lestrangle much like all sadistic psychopaths, revealed a flaw in her little restraint system,” said Harry. “They might not be harmed by magic, but they can be cut by other means. If I can somehow find a way to release myself, we might have a chance.”

“Do take as much time as you need,” said Snape.

“You know, Severus, you could be offering suggestions as criticisms,” responded Lucius. “The boy is offering a way to get out, perhaps if we find something...”

“A solution that has to happen in the next five minutes or...well I don’t need to elaborate,” said Snape looking at Lupin, who looked depressed at what could not be avoided, Harry moved over, as he rolled over, at an awkward angle, seeing an overturned chair. He inched over, feeling his shoulders pull and yank, as seconds ticked by and he saw the sun had gone down, it would not be long before the moon would go up.

“I don’t mean to be critical Harry but...WOULD YOU HURRY IT UP!” shouted Draco, losing his head.

“Of course, I always have to do everything, blasted Slytherins, can never do anything themselves,” grumbled Harry, hoping this would work, otherwise he was, for lack of a better term, screwed. He managed to get his feet up underneath the chair and kicked off, aiming for a nearby window.

Much to his relief, the chair crashed right through the window, sending glass everywhere, a jagged piece right next to Harry, who began to cut his restraints, trying to avoid cutting himself. Time was nearly out, perhaps only a couple of minutes.

-

Elizabeth and Ginny, still under the Invisibility Cloak, watched, looking at the Whomping Willow. Nothing happened, as Elizabeth turned to Ginny.

“Are you sure Snape and Lupin came this way?” asked Elizabeth.

“Yes, I’m sure, but we lost them avoiding Filch and Mrs. Norris for a little bit, but they had to have come this way, it’s almost like they disappeared in that tree,” said Ginny but she shook her head. There was a shadow appearing from underneath the tree, as the trunk appeared to open up. Elizabeth looked forward, but she saw the face of Bellatrix Lestrange, appearing from underneath the tree. Elizabeth closed her eyes, but Bellatrix looked pleased. It was almost like she had walked onto the Hogwarts Grounds just to prove that she could.

“Elizabeth what are you doing?” hissed Ginny under her breath.

“I’m going after her, she knows where Harry is,” said Elizabeth firmly, she was not afraid of Bellatrix Lestrange. She pulled the cloak off and held the wand at Bellatrix, who looked at her with a bright, yet somehow, psychotic smile, especially considering that Elizabeth’s wand was pointed right at the woman.

“Elizabeth Potter, if I’m not mistaken,” remarked Bellatrix calmly and Elizabeth stood there, arms folded, intense look in her eyes, but she refused to back down for any reason at all. “Maybe things have changed since I’ve been at Hogwarts, but isn’t it against the rules to be out of bounds after a certain amount of time?”

“Where is he?” asked Elizabeth, not letting Bellatrix fool her for a second. The woman appeared to be harmless at the moment, but appearances were deceiving.

“Who?” asked Bellatrix, stalling for time, not wanting to the girl to do anything recklessly heroic to ruin her plans for the future and the inevitable return of the Dark Lord.

“Harry, I know you took him and Draco Malfoy as well, the question is where are they?” asked Elizabeth. “You better tell me or...”

“Elizabeth, let’s be realistic, there is nothing you can do to me that will make me afraid of you, you are nothing but a little girl, scared,

trying to lash out against everything, but you have been broken by your Muggle relations,” said Bellatrix calmly or at least as calm as she ever gotten. “You have potential and you will achieve that but not quite yet. Harry, on the other hand, I know who he really is, he’s the one who defeated the Dark Lord, by some inconceivable fluke but he is the one. You were a decoy, Dumbledore did well and fooled almost everyone, making them think Harry was dead but his plan was obvious.”

“Let Harry go now or I will hex you,” said Elizabeth, her eyes narrowing in a dangerous expression. She was beginning to lose her temper and through her mother’s diary, she learned some extremely powerful spells that could be used as weapons. Lestrangle seemed like the perfect guinea pig but she was unconcerned.

“Isn’t that cute, the little girl thinks she can frighten big bad Bella?” cooed Bellatrix before she cackled at Elizabeth. “You don’t have the guts to do anything, otherwise you would have turned those Muggles into bugs and stomped on them a long time ago. So why don’t you run along and play with dolls or whatever it is that normal little girls do and....”

Elizabeth finally lost her temper and a blast of solid red light, the crimson color of blood blasted from her wand. It was not as powerful as it could be and easily blocked. She staggered slightly, as Bellatrix looked at Elizabeth, with an amused look on her face before she shook her head.

“Okay, maybe you do have some guts, but I’m trying to be a nice person, trying to offer you to turn around, walk back inside the school, to live and breath enough day, you don’t even have to be afraid that I might kill you, because that was never the plan, I knew that your status of the Girl-Who-Lived was a sham the moment I heard about your treatment at the hands of the Muggles,” said Bellatrix as she looked at Elizabeth. “Deep down, underneath all that temper, you’re nothing but sugary sweet and blissful niceness, a perfect picture of a pureblood princess. I’m the opposite, I had to fight to become what I was, against the Dark Lord’s top Death Eaters and I impressed him

enough to train me personally and he isn't that impressed. So, did you really think that you could scare me?"

Elizabeth broke free of the spell that was keeping her in place and several bolts of blue light, accidental, yet effective magic. She could sense that Harry was in peril and she would not stand for it. Bellatrix was caught off guard and managed a shield, just barely avoiding getting bludgeoned before Bellatrix whipped her wand, sending black fire shooting at Elizabeth. She dodged the attack and purple and sickly yellow flames shot from every which direction, cackling in the air.

"Alright, Lizzie, it seems like you need a little lesson in manners, your Muggle upbringing has caused you to become quite disrespectful to your betters, but fortunately for you, Auntie Bella will provide you with the tough love you need," said Bellatrix as sickly purple light shot towards the Girl-Who-Lived, but Elizabeth blocked it. She had never seen anything this brutal, Bellatrix more than lived up to her hype as one of Lord Voldemort's top followers. She heard it took a small army of Aurors to bring her down the first time and given how fast she could whip off a number of powerful spells, Elizabeth managed to put up a strong enough shield but she had to keep fighting. It would take everything she had.

"PROTEGO!" shouted Elizabeth, her previously shields and evasive maneuvers were made purely on instant but now she had to fight for her life. She cast a look towards Ginny's direction, almost pleading with her not to get involved, in fact to run but fortunately Bellatrix paid this no mind, as Elizabeth was nearly knocked off of her feet.

"You've run out of time," said Bellatrix as she looked up, to see the full moon rising above the sky, the moonlight shining above them.

-

"Free at least," said Harry, as he moved over, grabbing his wand, before walking over, as he saw Lupin going rigid.

“Hurry Harry, not much time left!” grunted Lupin, as he felt the wolf taking over within him, pretty soon he would be transformed. Both Malfoys looked nervous and Snape sneered to cover up any worries. On the outside, Harry was able to free people much easier, and quickly, Draco was freed as well, along with Lucius Malfoy, as Lupin began to transform, shifting. He gave a pained howl, as his eyes looked yellow, teeth jagged, as he ripped through the ropes, looking up.

“To the Whomping Willow, quickly!” shouted Snape as he blasted furniture in the way of Lupin, in an attempt to stall the werewolf a few seconds, but the beast blasted right through the furniture in a breeze, as the group moved down the tunnels. Lupin fell to his knees for a second, as if fighting something. Harry stalled for a second.

“When he’s conflicted, the incomplete change could be causing this, this could be our chance to escape,” said Lucius calmly and the group made up the tunnel, before Lupin rose up. The werewolf was angrier than ever and smashing up the Shrieking Shack, scratching the walls and destroying every piece of furniture inside, as it sniffed around, almost searching for prey but gave a pained howl, almost as if some struggle was causing it unbearable pain.

Snape whipped his wand out and prepared to open the front of the Whomping Willow but he could here the werewolf, at the top of the tunnel.

“We don’t have a second to spare, get through there, right now, I’ll stall him the best I can,” said Snape, as Lucius, Draco, and Harry moved through the tunnel. Snape turned, to face off Lupin. “Lupin if there is a bit of sanity left in you, listen to me and stop this...”

Lupin swiped at Snape angrily, knocking him to ground. The wolf had recognized Snape as an enemy and Snape was dropped down in the tunnel of the shrieking shack by a vicious, sickening swipe of the paw, the claws digging into the side of Snape’s face. The werewolf’s ears perked up at the noise from outside, and abandoned Snape, leaving the Potion’s Master in the tunnel, badly bleeding. The only thing going



for his favor right now is that he had not been bit, a miracle in itself but the blow still left Snape in a horrible and quite pained state.

-

“Yes, Filius, I see it as well, but not as good as you could from your vantage point from your office,” said Minerva in a hushed voice, as she watched outside the window, seeing flashes and loud magically created explosions, that obscured most of the vision but she recognized it as a fight of some sort, involving Bellatrix Lestrange and what looked like Elizabeth Potter on the grounds. “Send a message to Hagrid at his hut, he’s in the best position to take a look, but tell him to only intervene if absolutely necessary. I will contact the Ministry and inform them of the situation.”

Minerva withdrew from the fireplace and quick took a handful of powder, before she threw it in the fire.

“Minister of Magic’s office!” shouted Minerva and Fudge’s face appeared in the fire briefly.

“Yes, I’m aware of the situation going on at Hogwarts,” stated Fudge in an impatient voice. “I’m sending the Dementors to investigate the situation right now, they’ll be on their way.”

“I told you those things are not to be allowed on the grounds,” hissed Minerva. “Why can’t you send Aurors?”

“Because there aren’t any available Aurors, most of them are guarding respected members of pureblood society,” said Fudge shortly. “I’ve allowed you to have some control but obviously too much, as Lestrange has gotten on the grounds, it can be seen from Hogsmeade, we’ve had seven Floo calls in the last three minutes. I’m putting a stop to this right now and the Dementors are the best way to do it. Don’t try and interfere with the situation, Minerva or I’ll have you arrested.”

The Floo was disconnected, before Minerva had a chance to speak up. She turned, holding her wand. She remembered what happened

to the girl last time and if there was a situation on the grounds involving the Dementors, she was in danger.

-

Elizabeth was on the ground, wincing, as her elbow was awkwardly popped out of place. Bellatrix stood over her, a sinister glare in her unblinking eyes, a predatory smile on her face, as Elizabeth was magically dragged to her feet.

“I could kill you just as easily as I killed your twin, but it wouldn’t be worth the wand movements,” stated Bellatrix, as she blocked a spell and prepared to knock out Elizabeth. By the time she woke up, Bellatrix would be long gone. Elizabeth bounced up to her feet, and dodged the spell, as the front of the Whomping Willow burst open, revealing a very panicked Draco Malfoy, followed by Lucius, who tried to act like he was in control of the situation, and Harry, whose eyes were fixed on Lestrage.

“STUPEFY!” shouted Harry angrily, but his stunning spell was blocked. He doubted a mere stunner would work but he had to try. Bellatrix deflected it off to the side. He was knocked to his feet. Lucius attempted to step to the side, staying out of sight, but before the Whomping Willow could be sealed, the transformed form of Remus Lupin appeared, giving a pained growl, as it was fighting a painful, eternal battle between sanity and insanity. Lupin rocked back and forth, he looked about ready to gouge out his own eyes. The werewolf gave a loud growl and went towards Bellatrix Lestrage, who took a step backwards, showing something akin to fear for the first time, but Lucius raised his wand.

“Away from me beast!” shouted Lucius as the werewolf turned towards the Malfoy heir. Lucius threw a spell but a swipe of the werewolf’s paw disarmed Lucius. Time seemed to stop as Lucius was pinned to the ground, unable to defend himself and the werewolf lowered his jaws. Lucius screamed as the teeth ripped through his robes, before sinking into his chest. Blood splattered in every direction, as Lupin reared his head, the blood of Lucius Malfoy dripping from his teeth, a sickening gash in Lucius’s chest. Malfoy

turned over, having gone into his shock at what just happened and the ramifications on it. The fact he might bleed to death was secondary to the fact that his last name would no longer mean anything after what that beast did to him.

Lupin turned, as Bellatrix stood back, Draco looking shocked, unable to move, as Elizabeth and Harry turned around, wands drawn, as their eyes darted from Remus to Bellatrix. The werewolf paused, sniffing the air, before he walked forward.

A sharp arrow whizzed through the air from a crossbow, striking the werewolf from behind. Not enough to wound the beast, but enough to get his attention. The form of Rubeus Hagrid stood, an intense and angered look on the half giant's face, as he stepped forward. The werewolf stood, lowering his head, given a pained howl and quickly retreated towards the Forbidden Forest, almost as if he realized what he had done. Hagrid stepped forward, but Bellatrix stood with a smirk on her face. The air was getting cold around them.

"HARRY, ELIZABETH, DRACO!" shouted Ginny in a panicked voice, who was invisible at a safe distance. "I CAN SEE THE DEMENTORS COMING! YOU NEED TO GET OUT OF THERE NOW!"

The Dementors were gliding from Hogsmeade right towards the group. Bellatrix looked at them, from side to side, before she reared her head back and began laughing madly, as if she was amused by the situation. They could see an Auror off in the distance, but they were unable to move forward. Draco looked at them, unable to move, as the Dementors got closer. Even Hagrid, off in the distance, was paralyzed, his expulsion from Hogwarts all those years ago, fresh from there.

"You know, I was going to use another dark creature to finish you off, but these should do nicely!" cackled Bellatrix.

"You'll be kissed as well," rasped Harry.

"A small drawback," said Bellatrix, as she shrugged, but the Dementors got closer. Elizabeth and Harry exchanged looks right

away, as if communicating without words but Harry wanted to ensure they were on the same page.

“Happiest memory possible, Lizzie, we’ll do this together, between the two of us, we’ll be able to hold them off long enough, to get back to the school, get help,” said Harry, who tried to ignore the fact they still had one crazed Azkaban escapee to blast through as well.

The twins looked intense, as the Dementors were only a short distance away from them.

“EXPECTO PATRONUM!” shouted Elizabeth and Harry in unison as their wands lit up. The silvery light of a Patronus appeared from both of them, but much to their surprise, the lights intersected with each other. It created a blinding blast of light that filled the grounds of Hogwarts and could no doubt be seen from Hogsmeade and beyond. The Dementors paused, they were confused, they had never seen anything like this before, and the shape, something on four legs by what little they could see through the glare, blasted forward at quicker than the speed of light.

They could not be prepared for what happened next, not for a million years, as the Patronus blasted right through the Dementors. There were loud shrieks that could not possibly be human, as the cloaks of the Dementors were ripped open, revealing thin slimy skeleton forms that broke apart, releasing several bright shapes into the air. The souls that they had consumed over the centuries had faded, finally being freed from their prison and sent them right into the other side.

The light from the Patronus began to fade, as there were several wispy shadows that were once Dementors, before they disappeared completely into nothingness into a puff of smoke. Elizabeth and Harry exchanged looks of surprise, as Draco got to his feet, weakened, equally shocked.

Bellatrix stood, jaw dropped, as she turned to the twins, before she raised her hands slowly, and began to clap at what just happened, before she grew serious and held her wand.

“CRUCIO!” shrieked Bellatrix, pointing her wand at Harry. Harry screamed in pain, this curse was like getting stabbed by hundreds of flaming hot knives simultaneously. Elizabeth attempted to blast Bellatrix but she released the curse, only to block it. Elizabeth was knocked right off of her feet by the blast of sickly yellow light that Bellatrix sent at her. She could not feel her arms and legs and this worried her. Bellatrix turned her attention back towards Harry, blasting Draco with ease, slicing the side of his face. Blood splattered down to the ground as Bellatrix turned to Harry, who just barely made it to his feet. “CRUCIO!”

Harry screamed, this was pain beyond anything he thought he had thought. This was the same curse that Bellatrix used to torture the Longbottoms into insanity and now it was being used on him. She had a purely orgasmic look in her eyes as she tortured Harry.

-

The Auror outside of the village appeared shocked and awed, as he watched what happened. He was horrified when the Dementors had decided to turn their attention to the Girl-Who-Lived. It was almost like they were strangely attracted to her. The fact that two thirteen years had managed a Patronus was incredible, but what just happened defied all laws of magic and logic. Even the demented psychopath was impressed and applauded the impressive bit of magic.

He quickly managed to raise his hand, in shock as he pointed his wand, to send a message to the Ministry.

“ Commander Scrimgeour, we have a situation involving the Dementors, you have to see it to believe it, but I’m going to need back up, please get down here, as soon as possible,” said the Auror, as there were several pops right around Hogsmeade. Obviously, the press had gotten a hold of the situation at Hogwarts and had decided to get to Hogsmeade for a closer look. The Auror turned with a sigh, all things considered, he would rather be fighting Lestrangle than trying to deal with the magical press.

-

Ginny watched from underneath the cloak, eyes widened in horror. Elizabeth and Draco had already been taken down and Hagrid had disappeared, most likely to find some help. Not being a fully qualified wizard, Lestrage would rip Hagrid into shreds. Still, Ginny's hands were shaking, she could no longer bear to see Harry get tortured. She threw off the cloak and pointed her wand towards Bellatrix.

"PETRIFICUS TOTALUS!" shouted Ginny forcefully, in an attempt to put Bellatrix in the full body bind but the dark witch was alert and blocked it. Still it had ended Harry's torment.

"Oooh, a new little plaything," cooed Bellatrix in a mock baby voice as she whipped her wand. Ginny screamed as her eyes were assaulted by a spell. It was almost like about fifty or so camera flashbulbs went off in her face simultaneously. She saw dots as Bellatrix raised her wand but Harry shakily, with sweat rolling down his face, moved over, in an attempt to knock Bellatrix backwards, but she blocked it also. "For Salazar's sake Potter, you never give up, do you?"

"No, not with you," rasped Harry, as blood splattered from his mouth as he struggled to talk but his spell was blocked and he was sent to his knees. Bellatrix looked at him, intent to give him the full treatment, to cause his mind to snap just like she did to the Longbottoms. One more good Cruciatus Curse should do it.

"NO!" shouted Elizabeth forcefully and Bellatrix was blasted right off the ground and landed with a thud. Elizabeth had shaken off the effects of the paralyzing curse and moved forward, eyes blazing in anger. Bellatrix rose up to her feet to fight but another spell struck her right in the chest. The insane dark witch dropped to the ground, a loud crack echoing as her collarbone shattered, and Elizabeth looked towards her, angered beyond belief. "Let me make one thing perfectly clear, Lestrage! You asked why you should be afraid of me. THIS IS WHY!"

Elizabeth threw another spell towards Bellatrix and managed to disarm her by shattering her wand arm. Bellatrix dropped to the

ground, wincing, but refused to show any pain on her face. She just responded with a wicked, if slightly pained laugh. She had her limits like anyone else and when the few people she cared about were threatened, it caused her to fight like she never fought before.

“That all you got,” taunted Bellatrix but another crack as several of her ribs broken from the impact of the spell. Blood splattered from her mouth, as she dropped to the ground.

“You ever throw hurt my friends or family ever again...” stated Elizabeth and she did not need to finish her threat, as her eyes blazing with absolute fury told the story. Seeing Harry tortured like that, seeing Ginny in the ground in pain, possibly blinded, seeing Draco bleeding badly.

“Please don’t do this, I really never met any of this, it’s not my fault, it’s just a cry for attention, this entire dark witch thing,” pleaded Bellatrix, as blood dripped from her mouth, but a childlike innocence appeared in her eyes. “I never was hugged as a child too much and it’s causing me to lash out.”

Elizabeth paused for a second, as if almost considering if her own obsession would cause her to become like her someday but Bellatrix pulled herself up to her feet and a blast of light struck her in the chest. She struggled to breathe. If Bellatrix had been able to use her wand, it might have been a lot worse, but Elizabeth was on the ground in enough pain to begin with, as her lungs felt like they were on fire. Bellatrix rolled over, crawling towards her wand, but several footsteps moved forward. She looked up and saw the face of Rufus Scrimgeour, who was looking around.

“And where, Carver, are the Dementors?” asked Scrimgeour.

“You won’t believe it sir, but...” stated Carver as he wanted to get his tale out, as if he thought the more he kept shut up about it, the less true it would be but Scrimgeour raised his hand, as the group of the eight Aurors they could find on such a short notice. They had Lestrage cornered.

“Ah, you finally captured her after, oh about ten or so months, lovely, nice to see all of our taxpayers have been putting their Galleons in such an efficient department,” said the voice of Rita Skeeter, as she appeared, with a smug look as several other reporters from the Daily Prophet and other Wizarding publications made themselves welcomed on the Hogwarts grounds.

“Back up, this woman is extremely dangerous!” shouted Scrimgeour, but the Aurors were carefully considering their options. Bellatrix had put a group of four children, in various states of injury, between them, not to mention Lucius Malfoy, who looked in pain.

Lucius shifted his position, under the guise of a failed attempt to get his feet. He managed to slow the bleeding to a non-fatal level, but he was not willing to let the parasites of the press see that he got bitten by a werewolf right away. Bellatrix looked at the Aurors, as Scrimgeour motioned for them to turn away. She managed to reclaim her wand and it was a stand up, as she shifted her focus towards the members of the press. Bellatrix looked towards Rita Skeeter, with amusement in her eyes.

“Sadly, Skeeter, you’re not going to be writing about me going back to Azkaban tonight,” said Bellatrix, who managed to pull up Draco Malfoy, using the young pureblood heir as a shield, the cut still visible on the side of his head. Bellatrix put the wand at his neck, and it seemed like all of the Aurors were too terrified to put the thirteen year old boy in danger. “Still, so you don’t go home empty handed, I’ve got a scoop for you.”

She turned to Harry, with a bloody grin on her face, pained from all the bones the girl had broken but she had to make her move quickly.

“Harry Black is really Harry Potter, the supposed late twin brother of the alleged Girl-Who-Lived!” shrieked Bellatrix, pointing to Harry frantically, before she threw Draco right at the Aurors and activated a Portkey that she had on her, that moved her to a safe location.

By the time the Aurors could react, the fugitive was long gone, their failure seen by countless members of the press.



And that monster of a chapter is over. That was a chaotic one to write, really could have been two chapters, but I wanted to get everything moving next chapter will answer some questions and some fallout from the events of this chapter. Then the summer after the third year and beyond.

## Chapter Twenty Six: The Day After:

Most of the witch and wizards in the United Kingdom the previous night had gone to bed, without any idea what the next day would bring them. That had no idea of the incident at Hogwarts, while it reached the press and the Ministry, most of the normal citizens had no clue what was up. A few had heard rumors that something was up involving LeStrange but since she was nowhere near where they were living, they did not really give the matter a second thought before turning in for the evening. The next day, they were greeted by the Daily Prophet, the shocking details of the battle with Bellatrix LeStrange and the bombshell she dropped.

Harry Potter still lived. The boy that many of them thought were the one that defeated He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named, instead of his twin sister. He had been said to be dead, but there had been the conspiracy theories for the years after that Halloween night. That Elizabeth Potter was being used as a decoy, that Harry was actually the one, the Boy-Who-Lived. However, that theory faded, only popping up a few times and only as idle chat. Nothing more than a thought here and there, but the old rumors had started up again. Rita Skeeter's article hinted of Dumbledore's deceptions, basically saying both of the twins were in on the scheme but had a falling out with Dumbledore sometime, that lead to the incident at the Dursleys. Many believed that and wondered what would happen now. A good portion of them felt gleeful, their hero had returned and they felt relieved that they were no longer required to say a weak little girl who got herself beaten by Muggles had been their savior.

It was shaping up to be one of the most eventful days in the Wizarding World history since the defeat of He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named.

-

“WHAT DO YOU MEAN ALL OF THE DEMENTORS WERE DESTROYED?” demanded Fudge loudly, as he stared down Scrimgeour and the young Auror, Carver, who looked like he would rather be anywhere else but having to face the wrath of the Ministry of Magic.

“As I’ve said, those two, they managed to create a Patronus, both of them, they merged, and I couldn’t really see what it was, but the Dementors were destroyed,” said Carver in a nervous, shaky, voice, as Fudge hammered his fist down on the desk, as he looked back at Carver, trying to determine whether or not to believe the story.

“I know it sounds far fetched Minister, but it explains why the Dementors were not anywhere near Hogwarts,” offered Scrimgeour and Fudge just turned to Carver, with an irritated look on his face. Not only did the fugitive escape, but two children managed to create a Patronus that destroyed a good percentage of the Dementors that the Ministry had at their disposal.

“Carver, Scrimgeour, we’re going to the Wizengamot courtrooms to verify your story, to see what went down,” said Fudge. He wanted to know how those blasted children had managed to create a Patronus so powerful that the Dementors would not be chased off or destroyed. He just threw the Daily Prophet to the side, the entire Harry Potter situation already had put him in a bad mood; the brat should have informed the Ministry that he was alive, he was their savior after all and he had a duty to support the Ministry. It was now obvious why the Dumbledore sent the girl to live with Muggles, she was not the one. Fudge grudgingly admitted that it was a brilliant scheme, but the fact that he was fooled by it had angered him beyond belief.

If there was one thing that Cornelius Fudge detested, that was being made to look like a complete and utter fool. Once had had the matter investigated thoroughly, he would get to Hogwarts and question the Potter twins and he hoped for their sakes they had some really good answers

-

Elizabeth Potter woke up, yawning as she stretched. She vaguely remembered being escorted up to the Hospital Wing for some medical attention, given a potion to help with the pain she was suffering but after that, everything was a total blank. She sit up slightly, there was a still a dull pain but at least she could breath. She

spotted the figures of Harry, Ginny, and Draco lying on beds and vaguely, she could see Snape and Lucius Malfoy as well in the Hospital Wing. Malfoy seemed to be unwilling to get out of bed. Elizabeth turned slightly, looking at the mirror on the side of her bed. Her face was worn, showing the ravages of battle the last night. Bellatrix Lestrange had given her quite a battle.

“Awake, Lizzie,” muttered Harry from the other side. He was sore, from the exposure of the Cruciatus Curse and thought for a brief few seconds that he was going to die last night.

“Yeah Harry, how are you?” asked Elizabeth and Harry just turned, with a slight shrug, barely able to sit up from the battle.

“Well, I’ve been better that’s for sure,” said Harry, as he rubbed his eyes with a yawn. “The secret’s out, you know.”

“You mean I didn’t imagine Lestrange blurting out who you really are in a pained haze,” stated Elizabeth in a fearful voice and Harry nodded grimly. “Harry, it’s happened, people will think you’re the one who defeated him and you’ll never be left alone, people who only want to know you because of that...”

“Perhaps it’s for best, Lizzie that they think I’m the one, not that it really matters,” said Harry. “At least you’ll have a peaceful life and people will get to know you for who you really are and not for your fame. I don’t really care, to the people who matter, who is the one, it won’t matter.”

“I just wish it hadn’t been one of us,” said Elizabeth and Harry responded with a nod. Life would have been much easier if it had been some total stranger that they would never have to meet as the Boy-Who-Lived. They would grow up with their parents with a normal life and maybe have younger siblings. He could only begin to guess what might have happened if someone else had been attacked by Voldemort when their power broke.

“Did someone get the number of the broomstick that hit me?” grumbled Ginny, as she woke up, for the first time, the twins saw that

her eyes were heavily bandaged from the spell that Lestrangle hit her with last night.

“Easy, Miss Weasley, your eyes are being repaired by the potion I gave you, it was lucky really, if Lestrangle had not been off on the angle, you would have been blinded for the rest of your life,” said Madam Pomfrey as Draco was just groggily awakening, there was a scar on the side of his head and he seemed to be the most healthy of the entire group, for all that was worth.

“I had the most horrible nightmare,” grumbled Draco. “Aunt Bellatrix used a Polyjuice Potion to impersonate my Father, dragged Harry and I off to the Shrieking Shack, Professor Lupin was a werewolf that tried to mangle us, we just barely escaped, Father got bitten before Lupin ran off into the Forbidden Forrest, Ginny, Elizabeth, Harry, and I had to fight Lestrangle, Harry and Elizabeth destroyed a hundred Dementors, and then Harry was revealed to really be the late Harry Potter.”

“That wasn’t a nightmare Draco,” offered Harry weakly.

“I was afraid of that,” said Draco darkly as he paused, allowing the news to fully sink it. It was a lot to swallow and something that took a bit to fully grasp. “So you mean you were really...”

“Yes, I’m really that person,” responded Harry coolly and paused. “Well, technically I did undergo a blood adoption ritual when I was one so technically...”

“Technically you are still Harry Black, but I doubt most people would even bother, preferring to worship you because they think you might be the Boy-Who-Lived,” said Draco as he paused. “Why didn’t you tell me?”

“Would you have believed me if I said I was someone who was believed to be dead?” asked Harry and Draco shook his head.

“Point well taken,” said Draco. “Everyone’s going to believe Aunt Bellatrix, Rita Skeeter was positively drooling about the prospect of the story, never mind if it was true or not.”

“It is, believe me,” said Ginny weakly. “It’s a wonder that no one figured it out before then...”

“Well who would expect someone to hide Harry Potter by using his real first name,” said Harry and Ginny and Draco nodded in agreement, that was true, as Madam Pomfrey walked over.

“That werewolf will pay for what he did to me,” grumbled Lucius from the other end of the room.

“Seems to me like you’ll be paying the Ministry when they find out you were bitten,” commented Snape and Lucius just shot Snape a disgusted look but he was right. The werewolf regulation, that Lucius had endorsed ironically enough, would ensure that all the Malfoy family assets were seized. He had worked with Umbridge before her untimely demise. That little scheme to help push that legislation through had come back to bite Lucius.

No pun intended of course.

“You four have visitors, but only Miss Turpin, Miss Patil, and Miss Lovegood will be allowed in, the rest of you are to return to your dormitories at once!” shouted Madam Pomfrey roughly and Harry sighed. Rita Skeeter had to be up all night concocting some story and no doubt half of the school would be at the Hospital Wing, trying to get a look at the person that many felt was the true savior.

“Do as Madam Pomfrey says or points will be deducted and each of you will spend every day next year in detention!” shouted McGonagall from the other end, and Luna, Lisa, and Padma slid into the ring, all looking a bit frantic.

“It’s a madhouse out there,” said Luna as she looked around. “It took Professor McGonagall and Professor Flitwick almost an hour to

restore order in the Great Hall when the news got out, you would think everyone forgot had to act like civilized human beings.”

“So what did happen last night?” asked Padma.

“Yeah, the Daily Prophet has their own intriguing account of what happened last night, but naturally we know that nothing they write is to be believed,” said Lisa, as she turned to the group. “We want to hear what’s true...”

“If it’s about the fact that Bellatrix Lestrange nearly killed us last night and Harry is my supposed dead twin brother, than those parts are true,” said Elizabeth calmly, which caused Lisa and Padma to do a double take but Luna did not seem all that surprise for some reason.

“Don’t forget the part of us creating a Patronus that managed to wipe out a hundred Dementors,” added Harry.

“That wasn’t in the Daily Prophet,” said Lisa, but her eyes were widened, and the others looked rather surprised at this piece of news.

“Don’t ask us how it happened, we don’t even know, in fact, we can’t even figure out what the Patronus was,” responded Elizabeth and the others responded with nods. “I knew that I was Harry’s twin for the last year, he finally told me after the Chamber of Secrets mess.”

“So that’s why you were so upset at the end of last year,” said Padma in realization and Elizabeth responded with a nod.

“Exactly what absurd rumors are the Daily Prophet printing?” asked Draco, speaking up for the first time and he could have sworn he saw his father take an unusually unhealthy interest at what was being said.

“Oh, Rita claimed that Harry was really the one, that it was a conspiracy with Dumbledore to begin with, it was a falling out,” said Lisa as she shook her head. “To some people, that obviously matters.”

“Everyone who matters needs no explanation, but for everyone else, no amount of explanation will convince them of anything other than their own stubbornly ignorant views,” said Luna sadly and Harry nodded.

“I couldn’t have said it any better myself, Luna,” said Harry but he could not help himself. “You almost seem like you figured it out sometime ago.”

“Well I did expect it for sometime, but I figured if you were really Harry Potter, there was a good reason why you were keeping it quiet,” said Luna calmly as she looked at Harry with seriousness. “It did make sense, how protective you were of Elizabeth, the fact that you seemed to interact and be on the same page like twins. Most wouldn’t have figured it out but I guess I’m not like most.”

“No you’re not Luna, you’re one of a kind,” responded Harry and Luna nodded with a smile as she went over to visit with Ginny. Elizabeth still was feeling the affects of what happened, in fact they all were.

Lucius Malfoy on the other hand, dreaded the moment that he would be uncovered. Once again, thanks to the laws he helped pass, Madam Pomfrey would be forced to submit a report to the Ministry, telling them that he was found to be turned into a werewolf. His life as a functioning member of society was over. He knew Narcissa would turn away from him, his wife had detested dark creatures and Draco, he would be banned from seeing his own heir, not that it mattered. The only thing that was good coming out of this was that at least Lupin would be put down like the mongrel he was for biting a formally influential member of a pureblood society.

The fire in the hospital wing came to life and Madam Pomfrey moved over, to see the face of Professor McGonagall, who looked extremely agitated.

“Poppy, I apologize, but the Minister of Magic is here and he is demanding to see both of the Potter twins, he is raving about them destroying Ministry property,” said McGonagall.



“The children need rest, they can’t be burdened by an investigation right now,” argued Pomfrey. “Tell him that he isn’t allowed to be up here...”

“Fudge won’t take no for an answer, he says this matter needs to be taken care of soon,” responded McGonagall, who looked extremely irritated. “He’s on his way up there, with a small team of Aurors, he’s yelling about them being too dangerous to be allowed in society.”

“OUT OF THE WAY!” demanded Fudge from the hallway, as he entered the Hospital Wing, with six Aurors, all of them holding wands and looking rather surly. A couple of them looked towards Harry with curiosity. Fudge turned and looked towards both of the Potter twins, angered beyond belief. “Both of you are under arrest for what you did last night.”

“On what charges, Minister,” responded Harry coolly, as he looked at Fudge.

“You know what you did, your Patronus spell, it destroyed Ministry property,” sputtered Fudge angrily. “That’s magic that children your age should not be learning anyway, the Ministry of Magic has judged it to be unnecessary for you to know such advanced magic...”

“Yes, but it wouldn’t be necessary if your Dementors didn’t try to give me the Dementor’s Kiss,” responded Elizabeth, who felt her temper rising but restrained herself. It would not serve any argument she had if she had hexed the Minister of Magic through a window.

“Besides, based on your own bigoted laws, you have nothing to arrest us on,” said Harry and Fudge looked at Harry, eyes snapping towards him.

“You have two minutes to clarify that remark boy!” demanded Fudge, who was going red in the face and his hands were shaking. Two of his Aurors stood by, ready to restrain the Minister, in case he did something foolish.

“Well, your laws state that a person has a right to defend themselves if their lives were threatened by dark creatures and can use any means necessary to do so,” stated Harry calmly, as Fudge looked horrified. He had made that law to protect purebloods from vengeance against dark creatures and now this child was throwing it back in his face, using it against him. “Given the fact that the Dementors tried to suck my sister’s soul out two times, before she was barely saved, that was proper enough reason to feel our lives were threatened. Never mind the fact that the Dementors were going for us and not the fugitive they were supposed to go after.”

Fudge looked angered, nearly choking on his words before he turned to them.

“How did you do it?” demanded Fudge. “Destroy the Dementors, not even a corporeal Patronus should be that powerful and...”

“I wouldn’t know Minister,” said Harry as he shrugged. He had his theories but he was unwilling to share them with that fool. Fudge looked at Harry.

“You should have informed me who you were,” responded Fudge in a forced calm voice, finally coming to the realization that it would not look good for the Minister of Magic to be seen yelling with the Boy-Who-Lived. “All this time, I thought Miss Potter was the Girl-Who-Lived but obviously this was not the case, considering how weak she is...”

“You should ask Bellatrix Lestrange if she ever gets captured, how weak I am,” said Elizabeth calmly but Fudge ignored her.

“Would you even give me the time of day if you didn’t believe that I was the so called Boy-Who-Lived?” asked Harry. “In fact, why should you really care? Lord Voldemort is dead, isn’t he? Last I checked that was the official Ministry word.”

“Correct, Mr. Potter, that is,” agreed Fudge but Harry held up his hand to stop Fudge before he embarrassed.

“ I was subjected to the Cruciatus Curse last night against Lestranger,” said Harry in a tired voice. “Not to mention that Patronus Charm that my sister and I did took a lot out of both of us. Just leave us to rest.”

“Very well then Harry, but I will be in touch,” said Fudge, who made it very clear he was far from done with the boy he perceived to real savior of them all and he turned with his Aurors, he had to return to the Ministry at any rate. There were going to be all sorts of fires that they required to put out to stabilize the magical public. It was damage control at its finest.

“Hold on Minister, there is just one matter that I have to discuss with you, given the recent laws that were passed,” said Madam Pomfrey and Lucius attempted to discretely move from the Hospital Wing, but found himself still weakened, unable to walk on his own accord. “In my physical evaluation of Lucius Malfoy, I discovered that he had been bitten and transformed into a werewolf.”

Fudge turned to Lucius, a look of absolute disgust appearing on his face.

“Is that true, Mr. Malfoy?” asked Fudge coldly, as he took a step back from Lucius, as if worried that he would become a werewolf as well by being in such close proximity to the head of the Malfoy house.

“That brutish mongrel did bite me,” grumbled Lucius, there was no use denying it, his life as a member of pureblood society was pretty much over. He would have to move into some rat infested flat and would have to get a real job to support his life. Still, if he was going down, Lupin was going to get taken down with him. “The werewolf, Remus Lupin, ran off into the forest after he attacked me...”

“Arrest Lupin once he returns and bring him to the Department of the Disposal of Dangerous Magical Creatures,” said Fudge coldly and Elizabeth and Harry both attempted to sit up, horrified looks on his face.

“Why are you going to do that, he was transformed, he wasn’t in control of his actions?” demanded Harry.

“Yeah, you can’t just punish me,” inputted Elizabeth and Fudge just looked at the twins, with a cold expression on his face.

“It was Lupin’s responsibility to make the proper precautions to isolate himself from normal humans during the fool moon, in fact, he has yet to register himself officially with the Ministry of Magic and is violating magical law by teaching here to begin with, not to mention he bit a formally respected member of pureblood society and turned him into a vicious beast,” said Fudge as he looked away from Lucius with a sneer. Elizabeth made a movement to protest but Harry gripped her arm firmly, reaching from his bed to hers.

“Lizzie, I know it’s not right, but this is one battle you won’t win no matter what,” hissed Harry and Elizabeth nodded. She still was a bit hurt that Lupin did not even bother to check up on her but she certainly did not want the man dead. Fudge refused to listen to all reason and he turned with his Aurors, walking from the Hospital Wing, to station them outside of the Forbidden Forest.

-

Another year of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry had ended on the most dismal note. The moment he had exited the Forbidden Forest, Remus Lupin had been arrested and brought to the Ministry of Magic. His sentencing was in process and would be carried out before the students had exited the Hogwarts Express at the end of the year. Lucius Malfoy was said to be ruined and the few remaining purebloods who had power in the Ministry after Lestrage had thinned out the ranks had pushed for Lupin’s execution.

“Mum tried to write to the Minister, trying to plead to them to reconsider,” said Harry as he had sat down with Elizabeth in a classroom just before the end of the year feast.

“Bet they binned the letter immediately,” said Elizabeth grimly and Harry responded with a calm nod, his sister was rather perceptive in

these situations. "Lestrangle put us in that situation but they just don't care. Lupin was a werewolf, he bit someone, therefore he's the one at fault."

"Things will just get worse, there will be a bunch of people trying to seize power, Lestrangle's massacre might have thinned out the ranks, but she created a power vacuum in a lot of the higher levels of the Ministry," said Harry. "Chaos and distrust, the laws restricting magical creatures will only get worse and now, I'm exposed, the Ministry is going to watch both of us more closely after what we did to the Dementors, even though technically it wasn't illegal. They fear power, especially power that they have no way to control."

"At least Voldemort's dead, because things would be so much worse if he was out there," said Elizabeth and Harry looked at Elizabeth with a sigh.

"Lizzie, I don't know whether or not Voldemort's dead or not, he could still be out there," responded Harry and Elizabeth shuddered, she had heard the stories but nothing she heard could be worse than experiencing the wrath of Lord Voldemort in person.

"I hope you're wrong Harry, because there's no way I'll be ready," said Elizabeth grimly.

"You did well enough against Lestrangle," offered Harry.

"There is a distinct difference between doing well enough and actually winning, Harry," said Elizabeth as she looked like she had been placed on death row. "People will be after both of us now and if he does come back, well enough won't be enough to beat him."

"No, but maybe we can get you up to a better level, with training, practice, and study, it won't be easy, Voldemort has fifty years of magical experience on us," answered Harry with a frown. "Still if we give you a fighting chance, I would sleep a lot more easier."

“Both of us Harry, because something tells me, he intended to kill both of us, he just happened to take care of me first,” said Elizabeth. “But why?”

“I don’t have that answer, Lizzie,” said Harry but he wished he did. It would help both of them get the level they needed to be and be exactly where they had to be. Voldemort was quite an interesting situation, there had been no really definite proof rather the dark wizard was alive or dead. Harry was under the impression that there was a possibility that Voldemort was out there somewhere, under a severely weakened form, but unable to formulate any attacks on his own. Should anyone return him to power, then Voldemort would be a problem that they could not just sweep underneath the rug.

Still, Harry hoped that something could be arranged to get them some additional training, outside of what Hogwarts offered. It would not be easy, given the fact that the Ministry would monitor them a bit more closely giving the display of power they had when they wiped out the Dementors. They would want to know how, and in fact quite frankly, so would Harry. There were very few opposite gender magical twins through history and there was a theory that those opposite gender twins would have been able to accomplish extraordinary feats of power. Right now, that was the best explanation that Harry could think and it did make some sense.

Not to mention the fact that not only were they twins, but so were their wands which was extremely rare.

-

Minerva McGonagall sank down in her office, having ended the year and the children were already boarding the train. She looked at the latest edition of the Daily Prophet with disgust, as more debate raged on about who was the true savior. The sad thing is that people acted like this mattered. She found it was reprehensible the magical press glorified children, hyping them up as a savior, bringing them to a standard that no one at that age could achieve and then once nothing went their way, the children were torn down. They were subjected to harsh treatment and their reputations were muddled. The events of

last year involving Elizabeth Potter had proved just as much and now just because they found out that Harry was really alive, they thought he was the savior.

Minerva read the note, stating that the Triwizard Tournament that was tentatively planned for the next school year had been postponed indefinitely, because of recent events at Hogwarts. That suited her just fine, given the amount of students that had died years previously, it was tempting fate holding such a dangerous affair. While there had been measures and limitations to make things more safe nothing was for sure. Besides, that was a cause that Dumbledore championed and Minerva wanted no part of the potential liabilities that the Tournament offered.

“Hogwarts staff, please report to the staff room in one hour for a meeting!” called Minerva before she rose to her feet and began walking there herself. There were several issues to address, along with the unfortunate fact that they required another new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher.

-

Bellatrix Lestranges stumbled right through the forests of Albania. This country was the center of all dark magical activity in Europe and one that the British Ministry went out of their way to avoid. Bellatrix found it an attractive option to hide out for a few days, to plot what would happen next. Her plan had not completely failed, Lucius Malfoy was now disgraced and without a single knut to his name, thanks to being bitten. Snape was still among the living unfortunately and that brat that defeated her master still lived, but Bellatrix decided to take her victories where she could get them.

There was another reason why she had chosen the deep dark forests of Albania for her destination. Word had reached her that the Dark Lord or whatever was left of him had rumored to be taking up residence here. Whether or not it was true, it was still something that Bellatrix wanted to investigate and she walked through the forest, searching for anything. Her body tingled as she could feel extremely powerful dark magic within the forest, but then again, it could be any number of creatures giving off that aura. She stepped forward, wand

drawn, as she heard the rustling of leaves. Somehow, the forest was a bit more unnaturally dark than it should have been.

Suddenly, the leaves rustled above her and Bellatrix looked up, as magic filled the air.

“Bella,” hissed a very familiar voice that caused Bellatrix to jump. Even though she was looking for him, it still caught him by surprise. She looked up, a light shining at the end of her wand and she saw a swirling cloud of black mist above her, with red slit within the cloud.

“My Lord?” asked Bellatrix, who could not be more pleased at what she had come to.

“Yes, Bella, Lord Voldemort is pleased to see that you have reached me, despite a longer delay than I would have hoped, but it is a shame to see what I have become, what I have turned into,” hissed Voldemort. “I’m nothing but mere shadow and mist, a shade of my former power.”

“Surely there is something that can be done to return you to your former glory, my Lord?” asked Bellatrix.

“Yes,” hissed Voldemort. “There are certain rituals that will create a brand new body for me, but it will just return me to my old power, a power that was broken more and I cannot risk that occurring a second time. Yet, there is one item that will give me power beyond the imaginings of mere wizards.”

“Just tell me what I need to do and you will have that power my Lord,” said Bellatrix, who looked positively gleeful. She would do anything to pleasure her master.

“I have no doubt, but I must warn this, this will be a task that will be more difficult than anything you ever imagined,” responded Voldemort. “There are a set of scrolls and a mystic artifact you will need to acquire but the guardians of them will not part with them easily. They belong to a race of extremely powerful and ancient vampires in Albania.”



## Chapter Twenty Seven: The Orb

A hooded figure made her way through a crowded pub in an Albania neighborhood. This place was a bit of a troubled area, as it was considered to be in the middle of an epidemic of dark magic activity. However, the woman did not care, in fact, she had been awoken from a slumber of almost two years by the strangest of circumstances. She could not exactly what, but she sensed a dark and malevolent force was maneuvering into making a play for an artifact. Closing her eyes, the woman removed her hood, as she sat on a bench right across from the barkeeper. He turned, before he backed off in a horrified manner.

“Eskara?” asked the barkeeper. “I thought you had been destroyed...”

“Thanks to Lucius Malfoy I nearly was but I managed to retreat, before putting myself into an extended hibernation, to regain my strength and my power,” said Eskara as she looked around. The pub was crawling with filthy human abominations; the type that represented the worst that humanity had to offer.

“Well Malfoy has dark creature problems of his own, given the fact that he was turned into a werewolf by Remus Lupin,” said the barkeeper. “His entire fortune seized and his wife kicked him out on the streets. He’s a mess. The shame is, Lupin’s got to wash the taste of that foul bastard out of his mouth, surely that would be punishment enough. But, no, he gets executed for ruining a productive member of pureblood society. The Potter twins were right in the middle of the entire mess, Bellatrix Lestrange was there, broken out of Azkaban....”

“Potter twins? I was under the impression that Harry Potter was dead,” said Eskara with a raised eyebrow but this was a complete and utter lie. She knew Harry was still alive, two years ago. That was the reason why she abandoned her pursuits for Elizabeth, she knew her granddaughter would be in good hands.

“Haven’t you heard? Turns out that Potter went through a blood adoption ritual shortly after that night and was adopted into the Black

family, going under the name Harry Black, but people are saying he's really the Boy-Who-Lived," said the barkeeper.

"And I bet this matters to some people," said Eskara. "The Dark Lord is dead, does it matter who did it?"

"For some people on both sides, it does, me, I remain neutral, I get everyone's business that way," said the barkeeper. "Still, Eskara, you were never one for small talk, you had to come here for a purpose..."

"Right in one, it's been several years, but does Landios still come around this area?" asked Eskara and she caused several people to drop their drinks in shock. Landios was an extremely powerful leader of an ancient race of vampires that was located in Albania. She was dangerous and feared, not one that anyone in their right mind would like to cross.

"Occasionally she drops by to scare off all of my customers," whispered the barkeeper, almost as if he feared that Landios would come out from underneath the counter and rip out his throat with her fangs. "I hear she takes up residence in a shack up on a small hill just at the edge of the country, where...it's rumored to be guarded. Trust me, when you see it, you'll know that she's there."

"Very well, I'll pay her a visit, perhaps she could make some sense of the odd vision I received," said Eskara, who after her visit with Landios, she needed to find a way to get into Britain undetected, because if this meant what she thought it meant, the twins were in grave danger and needed to at least warned. Whether or not Harry and Elizabeth could be prepared inadequately in time, well that was another matter entirely.

-

"More of the same, I see," said Andromeda as she looked at the latest edition of the Daily Prophet that Harry had nearly thrown across the table.

“Skeeter’s taking things a bit too far this time, hinting that Elizabeth should be punished for committing fraud,” responded Harry angrily as he looked at the paper, it disgusted him.

“Still don’t know why you didn’t bother to deny it Harry, I mean Bellatrix’s mental state isn’t the best,” offered Nymphadora.

“I could have denied it, but it’s what I think they wanted to believe,” said Harry as he looked at it. “The sad thing is the truth is...”

“We know that I was the one, but proving it would lead to a lot of questions that none of us really want to answer,” remarked Elizabeth as she walked down the stairs for breakfast, shrugging slightly, as she sat down and took the paper, biting her tongue as she wrote it. “Lestranger has been rumored to be sighted in Albania, but the Albania Ministry has been uncooperative in allowing Ministry Aurors into the country.”

“I’ll clarify that’s true, Scrimgeour was in a bad mood, not to mention that Fudge is putting pressure on him to resign for his failure to bring Bellatrix in,” said Nymphadora with a sigh. “The Ministry is in shambles...”

“Look on the bright side, Dora, at least you finally become a full fledged Auror and don’t have to put up with the tedious training,” offered Harry supportively.

“Only two more months, but with the Ministry at it’s most chaotic, it’s kind of like a good news, bad news situation,” said Nymphadora with a sigh, as she looked at the paper. “Albania. That’s not really good, considering the people who believe You-Know-Who is still alive but mostly powerless....he’s there.”

“I’ve heard that rumor too,” said Andromeda with a frown. Her sister was the most fanatical follower and she looked towards Harry and Elizabeth, who were two of the top people on Voldemort’s too kill list. The moment he came back, they would be in danger. “You two, there’s no delicate way to put this, but if it’s true and he’s out there...”

“We need to be prepared,” offered Harry and Andromeda nodded, pleased that he knew how serious it is.

“I’ve got contacts in the Ministry, that might be able to help arrange with some extra training, but we have to do this discreetly,” said Andromeda carefully, as she needed to think this through. It was nearly impossible to get enough magical experience that would make them a match for Lord Voldemort in an undetermined period of time. If he could return, it could be in weeks, months, or years. Maybe not even at all, but it was hard. “The Minister of Magic tends to be someone who doesn’t like anyone who is considered to be a threat of with his power. He might be a problem, especially if Voldemort does return.”

“Bridge that we have to cross when we get to it, I guess,” said Elizabeth with a slight shrug of her shoulders as she looked at Harry, who responded with a calm nod. “The thing I’m worried about and this kind have gotten lost in the shuffle with all that happened with Lestrage over the last year is the Horcruxes. If there is more than one of them out there...”

“We can destroy them and stop Voldemort from returning,” added Harry in a firm voice and Elizabeth nodded. His face turned into a frown. “The problem is finding out what Voldemort has for his Horcruxes and where he might have them hidden. We know next to nothing about him other than he was born a half blood, the illegitimate child of a Muggle and a witch who just barely avoided being a squib...other than that, unless he managed to slip something that you could use when you had the diary.”

“Afraid not, Riddle was a bit smarter than I would have liked, but at least the diary was out of the way,” said Elizabeth, as she took a deep breath as if thinking. “But that won’t be the only one, especially considering how easily it was destroyed. He would not throw something like that in the line of fire, unless he had multiple backups and other Horcruxes, better protected than what was used on the diary. But, it does seem a bit hopeless?”

“Well there is one person that will know about this, the same person who seems to know about everything but refuses to tell anyone anything,” commented Andromeda lightly and the twins exchanged a look, it was obvious.

“That does make sense,” agreed Harry as he rubbed his temple with his fingers. “Dumbledore would know about Riddle, he seems to know why Riddle when after us but he’s not saying anything. The problem is making him spill what he knows and I doubt that we could manage to do that. I don’t even know where Dumbledore is.”

“So we’re going to have to focus on getting ready, should worse come to worse,” said Elizabeth and Harry nodded grimly. “That’s not going to be easy, considering Voldemort does have over fifty years of magical experience on the both of us.”

“I still have my old textbooks from Hogwarts, now granted, I don’t know how much good it will do preparing to defend yourself against the greatest dark wizard of this century, but it has to be a start,” commented Nymphadora. “I might have picked up a few things in Auror training too, but I’ll be honest, it took me months to comprehend some of the spells and that was after a full and through Hogwarts education. Still, I’ll do what I can and maybe something would work. Any chance is good, and besides I don’t want to see either of you get hurt.”

“It’s appreciated, thanks,” said Elizabeth, perhaps there would be some spells in there a bit more advanced. She planned on going over her mother’s diary with a fine tooth comb to find anything that would be of use, even if it did seem harmless.

“And I will see what I do, I don’t really want to admit that you two will have to learn to fight to this level, but if he comes back, it’s not use hiding from the inevitable,” said Andromeda, who also wondered if she could get an audience with the Department of Mysteries. If anyone could find out any information about Voldemort and where to find his Horcruxes, it would be them.

Ginny Weasley sighed as she sank on the bed. She had been home for two weeks and had already completed her summer homework but that just meant she had nothing else to do. She had been grounded for the entire summer. Apparently, nearly getting blinded by an insane Azkaban escapee was cause for her parents to be informed and somehow information of who she had been hanging around with at Hogwarts had gotten to her mother based on Madam Pomfrey's letter. Needless to say, her mother was not too pleased that Ginny had been hanging out with Draco and Harry.

To be more precisely, her mother had completely freaked out and started ranting incoherently at Ginny for nine straight hours until she had finally lost her voice. All Ginny knew was she was grounded, for associating with Draco, not so much Harry however. In fact, her mother appeared to have approved of Harry, for all of the wrong reasons. That article that had claimed he was the savior, her mother had bought that hook, line, and sinker. Ron did as well; it took everything she had not to hex him for his little burst of attitude towards Elizabeth, claiming she was evil because she was a Parseltongue and trying to steal her brother's glory. Percy naturally believed it, because that was the official word of the Ministry of Magic. As for the others, she could not really tell, nor did she care. She had just saw that certain members of her family were as closed behind as the people who hated Muggleborns and magical creatures.

She reflected back to the train station, the hug and small smile that Harry gave her, when they both spotted her mother glaring at Ginny when she walked off the train. Encouraging her that everything would turn out to be alright, but she got the sense that Harry was assuring himself as much as he was assuring her. The gesture was nice and Ginny felt a bit of pleasure knowing that Harry would reassure her like that. At times, she wondered if they were developing something a bit deeper than being best friends.

Still, she was cut off from her friends for the entire summer and two months without them, without even talking to Harry and the others would be torture. Especially considering the Quidditch World Cup had been postponed due to security concerns, but she doubted her

mother would have allowed her to go. After all, a proper young lady should not be allowed to view such a sport such as Quidditch.

-

In one of the better rooms in the Leaky Cauldron, Draco Malfoy sank down on a bed. It was not half bad, but still a bit less than he was used to. His mother managed to salvage a small portion of the Malfoy family fortune, before the Ministry came and took everything, including Malfoy Manor, sending Draco and Narcissa out on the street. Lucius had already left, after an intense argument with Narcissa, about meddling in matters that he should not be. Lucius appeared to be slightly beaten down with his failure and fled the manor, just hours before the Ministry had stopped by to confiscate everything.

Needless to say, Narcissa was taking her husband getting bitten by a werewolf and being turned into a dark creature very badly. She appeared to be a bit worn, less sophisticated, and more moody. She had snapped at Draco here and there, something Draco could not recall his mother ever doing to him. Dobby had been seized by the Ministry, as a Malfoy family asset, before he would be reassigned to another worthy pureblood family.

The loss of the status of his family name had been actually a welcome relief for Draco. He felt he had to play a certain game for his father and have certain friends within Slytherin, but now those friends abandoned him. He did not know what the next year would bring, giving the fact that many people detested him but actually he was in less danger than before. With no status as a pureblood, people would have fewer reasons to kill him to advance their own status. Fourth year was a year where the attempts started in Slytherin and while very few were historically successful, Draco would not take any chances whatsoever.

Then there was this entire Harry Potter situation. Really, the only difference was a last name. He would have liked to know, but as a Slytherin, Draco understood that secrets were kept for a reason. He gathered that Harry was mostly honest or at least as honest as people were in the Wizarding World. Both of them had been acting a

bit odd and a bit jumpy towards the end of the year, but really, Draco could not fault them. They had been through a rather horrific incident and Azkaban had warped his aunt beyond everything. Had Harry not been able to get them out, they would have been all transformed into werewolves or maybe just killed, if Lupin had gone into a rage in an enclosed environment.

Still, despite all, they had gotten out of this mess okay, but what the future would bring, that was another matter entirely.

-

Eskara made her way after a treacherous three day trek through Albania. It would have taken a shorter amount of time, but for obvious reasons, she could only do so by night. The vampire looked up at the hill, there was a shack that looked to be really nothing of importance but appearances could be most deceiving. She could sense some form of protection flowing from the cast and as she took more steps to reach the castle, getting closer, she came closer, halfway up the hill, the power was slightly more overwhelming. She heard raspy mutterings, voices that were there, but with no bodies. As she reached a certain point, a dozen figures in robes appeared. They looked like the oldest humans, but for vampires, that just meant they were centuries old.

“State your business, young one,” rasped one of the ancient vampires, but each of them looked like they could easily rip Eskara apart despite the great power she had. Vampires, much like wine, had only improved with age.

“I have come to seek an audience with Mistress Landios of a matter of the utmost urgency,” said Eskara slowly and the vampires exchanged an uneasy look, almost fearful at this one speaking the name of their mistress.

“One does not simply seek an audience with Mistress Landios, it just cannot be done, yes we sense great power within you and in a matter of centuries, you would be among the most powerful but do not step beyond your boundaries prematurely,” warned one of the



vampires, a rough looking male who looked like he could bend solid steel with his bare hands.

“Stand down my children, it is quite already, I had expected this visit for days now, once I had gotten a brief impulse of the vision that this one has received,” said Landios as she appeared, her dark hair framing over her pale face, sharp fangs. She looked like she had not aged, despite being one of the oldest vampires on earth. “Rosaline Eskara, I have heard a great deal about you. You have many devoted followers yet you try and fight your vampire heritage. You long for humanity once more, morality once more, at the same time enjoying the power. You live a life that is quite a paradox.”

“It is not for me that there is such conflict,” said Eskara carefully. “I’ve learned it can’t be helped.”

“Yet those thoughts occur and yes, it’s not out of selfishness, the children of the light, the two, they have a role to play in the upcoming battle that has been foretold throughout centuries,” said Landios as she beckoned for Eskara. “You have been in a suspended state, having been weakened by a battle, a foolish attempt to convert your granddaughter, the one who has been chosen.”

“I do know my own history,” said Eskara, deciding to take a step inside.

“It is important to put things in perspective, young one,” said Landios. “You may be a queen among the less powerful vampires, but in the grander scheme of things, you are just average. Given time, you will gain power, should you choose to go down that rant. Yet, yes, this is not the purpose of this visit. A flash, a vision in your mind, that could have troubling ramifications on all, human and vampire, and everything else.”

They reached a small room where Eskara sat down at the beckoning of Landios who sat down across from a table. Her mind relaxed as Landios began to try and determine the significance of the vision.

“He is after it, the Magician’s Orb?” asked Eskara in shock. It was only a myth, one that Landios and her followers had been rumored to be in possession of but there had never been definite answers everyway. It was rumored to contain the magical energies of millions of witches and wizards in a magical civilization lost millennia ago but no one had ever gotten it working.

“This is very grave, but with the forewarning, we can take steps to protect the Orb,” said Landios slowly. “I fear Lord Voldemort has already obtained the scrolls that may give him the answers to unlocking the vast powers of the Orb, proving he can decipher the ancient writings, a great deal of it lost, but there is enough out there to be of concern if he is patient enough to try. He wishes to enslave both sides of the magical world, the darkness and the light, along with everything in between. He wants absolute power and...they are the only one’s who have a hope in stopping him if should he somehow gain possession of the Orb and unlock its secrets. She has been chosen and he is the power.”

“They couldn’t stop them, he’s too powerful even without the Orb, he can and will destroy them,” said Eskara in a shaky voice.

“Perhaps, perhaps not,” said Landios mysteriously. “Rest assure take as long as I exist, the Orb will not fall into the hands of Lord Voldemort.”

“I do hope so, if half of the tales are true, there are great powers within the Orb that monster will be unable to fully grasp,” said Eskara and Landios responded with a stiff nod, with no emotion whatsoever on her face.

“On your way then, this warning is much appreciated, if nothing else, it verifies what already has...” stated Landios but she slumped over, a slight headache as she felt something nearing the shack. Eskara felt something extremely powerful as well, polluted and rather corrupted nearing them.

“ Attention you blood sucking fiends, I understand you have something that belongs to the Dark Lord!” cackled the voice of

Bellatrix Lestrange from outside of the house, as Landios got up to her feet, looking outside of the window, sure enough, she spotted the crazed twisted face of Bellatrix Lestrange at the bottom of the hill, with several other wizards. She had brought some back up, as there were a fair amount of humans in this country that worshipped Lord Voldemort, to the point of it being a fanatical cult.

“Human, you’re making a grave mistake, you have no idea what you are getting into, both attempting to take the Magician’s Orb and what trouble it could bring,” said Landios but Bellatrix just lead her group up the mountains. The first line of security that had met Eskara moved forward, trying to form ranks but the intruders showed no mercy whatsoever. Several wooden stakes were conjured right into the hearts of the vampires. They dropped to the ground, severely injured. It was only because of their power that they were not reduced to ash, but that would come within minutes if the stakes were not removed and sure enough, as one tried to rip the stake out, he found it was cursed, unable to be remove them.

Bellatrix and her followers made their way up the hill, this was a piece of cake.

“Do not get too cocky, Bella, there is still much to be done if we get our hands on the Orb,” hissed Lord Voldemort, from inside the snake that he had temporary possessed. The beast would perish within hours, so he had to move quickly. “Stay sharp all of you.”

The group of Albania wizards bowed with looks of glee, they had dreamed about the chance to serve Lord Voldemort and now they were getting a chance, making their way up the hill, where several purple rings of uniquely created magical energy shot up.

“Stall Bellatrix, you need to do as precisely as I say,” said Voldemort, as he prepared to relay instructions towards his most fanatical follower.

From inside, Landios was securing the protections around the room where the Orb was contained, as Eskara looked on. Thanks to the

self imposed lockdown she was sealed inside, with this ancient race of vampires.

“Lord Voldemort will not be able to breach the security, unless he brings down this entire shack,” said Landios in an icy voice, but she stopped when she realized this would be exactly what the Dark Lord may have in mind and she turned to more of her vampires. “We will fight for the Orb, they are humans, they might have dark magic that can harm us but if we fight them, we will be able to destroy them and make them regret this foolish attempt to get their filthy mortal hands on the Orb. Many of us will perish...”

The sounds of the outer protections collapsing cut Landios off but the ancient vampire was not deterred. Bring down the first layer of protections only brought up a second layer of protections that gave them a few moments to mount a counter attack.

Eskara looked around, overwhelmed, the reason why she was turned into a vampire was outside, she could feel it. She had never felt someone who had a soul so dark and decayed and in fact, there only was a small fragment of Lord Voldemort’s soul remaining. Yet, it was the worst, most polluted part. She realized that while her vision had gave a bit of forewarning, it was obvious that Lord Voldemort had managed to get together a small army to strike before Landios and her vampires could mount a counter attack.

A loud explosion echoed from outside, there was not that much time left and everyone inside knew up. Soon it would be a fight to the end, where the winners would dictate the fate of one of the most powerful, yet enigmatic magical object. The third set of protections went up, a last ditch effort to buy even more time but much like those that preceded them, they failed in lasting for long, as the shack began to rock, but the vampires stood in a battle formation, with their mistress in the middle.

“Foolish dark creatures, make this much easier, Lord Voldemort thanks you for that,” hissed the snake sarcastically as he turned to his makeshift army. “Bella, you and the others know what to do.”

“Naturally my lord, a few dozen baked vampires coming up,” said Bellatrix, as the vampires tried to move with expert quickness, but the humans were just a bit quicker. The light emitting from their wands was jet black but it was as bright as the most intense sun, as all of the vampires dropped to the ground. Those who had been caught right in the blast had perished instantly, those who had not were only slightly more lucky.

Eskara felt a light feeling in her head as she slumped to the ground, as several more blasts had released clouds of dust that judging from the smell was some kind of conjured garlic, ground up. Several of the vampires laid on the ground, clutching their throats as they closed up from inhaling what was like poisonous gas. Eskara thumped to the ground, managing to use her hood to block most of the attack as Landios got to her feet, face blistered, hands raw red but she refused to stand back and let Voldemort and his followers roll over her.

“Foolish mortal, you won’t ever get your hands on the Orb, and I doubt even if you did, you would be able to control the power,” said Landios as she hacked but the snake rose up, before biting one of the Albania wizards on the neck, sinking his fangs. The snake slumped to the ground, before it decayed at a rapid rate, as the wizard turned, inhabited by the polluted essence of Lord Voldemort, slowly, but surely killing him.

“Lord Voldemort always receives what he wants, soon all will perish and all magical people and creatures will bow down to the power of the Dark Lord,” said Voldemort softly as he rose up the wizard’s wand and a blast of white light struck Landios. She contorted in pain, it felt as if she had not fed on blood for centuries and it was slowly reducing her to nothing. “At least, Bella, retrieve the Orb, but take care in removing all of the protections. I fully expect them to have a full set of protections around it.”

They nodded as they began to remove the protections around the Orb, to lift it, to begin the next stage of the Dark Lord’s scheme. It would take some time to decipher the scrolls, as a fair bit of the language had been lost through the annals of time but the Dark Lord

was resourceful, having a number of tricks at his disposal to get what he wanted.

-

Elizabeth and Harry sat in the library, going through stacks and stacks of books of all sorts, looking for spells that they would find useful. The possibility, no matter how remote it must have seem, of Lord Voldemort returned. They really hoped that it would never come to that, because while they were fairly more advanced in their knowledge and abilities than most attending their year at Hogwarts, this was Lord Voldemort, the most dangerous dark wizard that ever lived. Training was being arranged but the process was going too slow

A loud crash that echoed from the outside area had caused Elizabeth to bolt from her feet and pull out her wand instinctively.

“Did you hear that?” asked Elizabeth and Harry nodded in affirmative. “Who is it?”

“Hopefully not Bellatrix,” muttered Harry, as while she had fled the country that had been a couple of weeks ago and there was a chance that was just to regroup, before calling a new plan.

As the twins moved down the stairs, Andromeda and Nymphadora were in position.

“Could it be, Bellatrix, Mum?” asked Nymphadora in an uncertain voice.

“No, the wards would have ejected her, whatever is out there isn’t human, but whether or not that’s a good thing or not...” stated Andromeda she trailed off, as something was attempting to pound their way through the front door. She took a couple of steps forward, tentatively, before she saw a hand briefly reach up through the panel of the door, before another loud crash.

Andromeda opened the door a crack and saw a broken, battered shape on the floor. She cautiously rolled it over. It was a woman, rather a vampire, her auburn hair hanging limply over her face as Elizabeth and Harry moved over, with Harry stopped. While she looked a bit different, Harry recognized her immediately.

“Eskara,” stated Harry in a surprised voice and Elizabeth stopped in horror.

“We better get her inside, she looks in bad shape,” said Elizabeth, as she looked at the woman, whose fangs were smaller than she remembered. It looked like she traveled a long way in very bad condition. Nymphadora moved over to turn help them move the vampire queen inside.

“Are you really sure this is a good idea?” asked Harry tentatively.

“Harry, she’s our grandmother in case you’ve forgotten,” said Elizabeth in an impatient voice.

“Who tried to turn you into a vampire against your will, yes, she had moments of conflict but you can’t forget her mind was a bit warped,” said Harry but Elizabeth just refused to acknowledge.

“I got through to her almost last time, until there was interference,” said Elizabeth with a frown. “Perhaps there is a way...”

“Maybe,” said Harry shortly, Elizabeth obviously thought there could be a way to save Eskara but Harry was a bit more skeptical. Whatever part of her was human had been lost in the corruption of power and while Harry liked to think she could be helped, he was being realistic about the situation.

At that moment, Eskara started twitching violently and Nymphadora and Andromeda attempted to stabilize them.

“Must warn...children...Lord Voldemort...returned...killed...has Orb...power...if he unlocks secrets...doom for everyone and everything on both sides...power...more than he can even control,”

rasped Eskara as she began moving around, it took all the strength they had to hold Eskara down.

“Elizabeth there is a blood replenishing potion in the kitchen in the cabinet, that should help her for long enough until we get some answers,” said Andromeda and Elizabeth bolted towards the kitchen as Harry watched her.

“She’s been chosen...he’s the power,” babbled Eskara, who kept muttering this over and over again. Harry had no idea what that could mean as his sister had rushed out of the room, just barely avoiding falling on her face as she handed the potion.

“Drink this,” said Andromeda in a firm voice, as Nymphadora held her wand. Eskara did so and her eyes had a bit more life in them.

“Thank you, even if it is only a temporary measure, but that should be long enough,” said Eskara with a sigh, as she turned to Harry and Elizabeth with a remorseful look on her face. “There’s no delicate way to say this but Lord Voldemort has just stolen an ancient mystic artifact, slaughtering the ancient race of vampires that guarded it. Should he unlock the secrets, he will have ultimate power and everyone will be doomed but none more so than you two.”



## Chapter Twenty Eight: Resurrection.

“So let me get this straight,” said Elizabeth in a tentative voice. “Voldemort...Lord Voldemort’s followers had gotten their hands on some powerful artifact and he could use it to return back to life.”

“Yes, it’s dire, but only if he gets the orb working and finds a way to channel the ultimate power within,” said Eskara. “Given his knowledge is far beyond most mere mortals, he may be able to get the orb working and harness the power. Regardless, depending on a few factors, we don’t have much time left.”

“Exactly how much time don’t we have left?” asked Harry, who regretted the fact that he would learn the answer.

“Days at the most, maybe hours or maybe mere moments before Voldemort rises again,” rasped Eskara. “Time grows short and the potential for Voldemort having omnipotent levels of power rises by each second, as it keeps ticking on the clock.”

“Great,” grumbled Elizabeth as she sank down on the chair, a number of horrifying possibilities swimming through her head. Voldemort was more powerful than she ever hoped to be, he was more experienced at magic than she would ever be, and that was without this completely mysterious but large source of magical power that he would obtain. “We just started trying to really seriously considering the fact that Voldemort would come back and now he’s coming soon..”

“Yes, well, I doubt he would wait around for you to get ready,” said Nymphadora but she was serious. “Look you two, I know this sounds bad but...”

“None of you try and do something like go after Voldemort,” said Andromeda in a pleading voice, including her daughter in the equation. “Nymphadora, I know you’re a fully qualified Auror but he’s much too much powerful to anyone. As for you two, I know there’s a chance you might be the only two to defeat him but...I don’t think it’s worth the risk.”

“Is there any chance that Voldemort’s attempt to activate the orb may fail?” asked Harry hopefully.

“Always a chance Harry, but this time, he won’t rest until he gets it working,” stated Eskara weakly. “His persistence is his greatest strength and weakness but you would only have days, especially if Voldemort deciphers the ancient language within the scrolls. Its something that will take an ample amount of time to accomplish and will stall Voldemort the most, but he does have the resources and the knowledge to do so.”

“So basically someone’s going to have to get the orb away from Voldemort,” said Elizabeth in a dismal voice.

“But when he knows the orb exists, he won’t rest until he has it back into his position,” argued Nymphadora and Eskara nodded grimly, this human had a pretty decent grip.

“The vampires who guarded it had kept its existence secret for a reason, it is too much power for one human to have, even the most noble human will not be able to handle the corruption,” said Eskara as she closed her eyes in weakness.

“What now?” asked Nymphadora to her mother and siblings but they all exchanged looks of great unease, while awaiting for some great and chaotic storm coming.

“Contact the Ministry obviously, hopefully we get someone who will hear us out and won’t disregard our warnings,” said Andromeda who obviously thought this was a long shot. Still if she got a hold of Amelia Bones, she might at least hear her out and try to warn some people. Whether or not that would lead to mass Ministry resistance against the potential uprising of Voldemort, it was something that remained to be seen. However, she had to try and she made her way into the next room, as Nymphadora stood over Eskara, whose eyes were glazed over, showing signs of weakness and the return of some kind of primal insanity.

-

Albus Dumbledore sat back, looking at the latest news, with disappointment. The Ministry never learned, it was a shame that Remus Lupin was executed when it was no fault of his own. Bellatrix had obviously lost whatever sanity she had possessed prior to Azkaban and had managed to figure out that Harry was in fact Harry Potter. There was a storm and people were overlooking the facts, rather than proclaiming who they wanted to be the hero, the hero. Even at his worst, Dumbledore would not do something like that, such deceit. For better or for worse, Elizabeth was the one and Dumbledore wondered where he would go from there. His plans for the girl was torpedoed and now he was back to square one. She needed the proper guidance to defeat Voldemort.

Right then, Severus Snape was outside of his door, banging on it, in a frantic manner. He had never seen Snape so frantic and disturbed.

“Yes, Severus, do come in,” said Dumbledore and Snape quickly bolted towards Dumbledore, rolling up his sleeve. Dumbledore looked at Snape, but his eyes narrowed when he saw the dark mark on Snape’s arm was getting clearer and more visible. “When did this start happening....”

“This morning, Dumbledore, just a couple of hours ago, I was in my laboratory, making potions for the Hospital Wing, when it burned back into my arm, it’s faded in and out, it’s almost like the Dark Lord is trying to unlock the secrets of something,” said Snape and Dumbledore looked grave. He had many theories, some quite outlandish but he tried to find the words. “He’s returning, Dumbledore, that’s for certain, it’s just a matter of when. My dark mark would not be acting like that otherwise and now if he returns...”

“I know, I wish we would have had at least another year or two to prepare for this but it looks like that is something that can’t be helped,” said Dumbledore with a frown, his mind working in overdrive.

“Lestrage, she found him,” said Snape suddenly as if this had just hit him and Dumbledore responded with a calm nod.

“I had guessed so and now she would do what is necessary to bring her master to power,” said Dumbledore gravely. “He will go after young Miss Potter right away, he would want to prove that her defeat against him was a fluke and now that she’s outside my protection...I’m afraid it’s likely Tom will send his followers after her.”

“There are a number of dark rituals that the Dark Lord could use that require a sacrifice of a powerful enemy to reclaim a body,” said Snape and Dumbledore nodded, this was all too true and now there was little that they could do but suddenly, a flash of light appeared. Both Snape and Dumbledore got to their feet, wands held, but the image appeared.

“We’ve come to issue a warning,” said a spectral voice. “The Dark Lord known as Voldemort has managed to get his hands on a powerful magical object, called the Magician’s Orb. It holds the magical power of many, but an amount of power that none can hold. The Dark Lord is tampering with matters beyond of what he can control. His desperation to regain a form that cannot be killed will lead to doomsday for the rest of the mortal world. He wants to bypass mortal bounds and gain unlimited, omnipotent power. Do not attempt to meddle in these events, Wizard Dumbledore. He will destroy you. Only the chosen child and her power may hope to defeat Voldemort if and when he obtains his power. His power will be greater than what any wizard could hold and without his safeguards, he would have destroyed himself.”

The image flickered into nothingness. Snape looked confused and Dumbledore just tapped his fingers, a twinkle appearing in his eye but it was rather forced.

“Tom has taken the ultimate desperate measure I’m afraid,” said Dumbledore sadly. “The Magician’s Orb, it was used by one of the oldest dark wizards, to absorb the magical power of millions of witches and wizards around the world. As the legend goes, at one time, every person on earth had the ability to perform magic but now with the orb, they became the first Muggles. The wizard experimented with great things and hid the orb, which I’d imagine if the stories are

true, fell into the custody of vampires. If I'm to guess, it appears Tom has gotten his hands on the orb and is attempting to unlock its vast secrets."

"Surely you don't believe this fairy tale?" asked Snape in a skeptical voice and Dumbledore just looked back at Snape, with a calm expression before he nodded.

"It's something that has to be believed, I'm guessing Voldemort's unique magical signature is interacting with whatever residual magic that is leaking from the orb, it could very well account for the strange fading and reappearing of your Dark Mark," said Dumbledore and Snape just skeptical but he decided it was best to humor the old man. "Judging by the look on your face, you do have another question."

"That spirit mentioned something about The Dark Lord having safeguards," stated Snape calmly. "What kind of safeguards?"

"This is only a theory, Severus, but I believe Voldemort has dabbled with the creation of Horcruxes, you are familiar with them, I'd assume," said Dumbledore and Snape responded with a nod, as someone who was engrossed in the darker arts, he had familiarized himself with those horrifying abominations even though he was by no means an expert. "In fact, the diary that Miss Potter encountered that led to Miss Granger's tragic accident when she foolishly encountered it was a Horcrux."

"I notice you had mentioned them in the plural form," said Snape calmly and Dumbledore nodded approvingly.

"I'm afraid that is all too true, while the Potter twins managed to destroy the diary, it had only begun, Lord Voldemort has many other Horcruxes out there, I believe he wished to split his soul into seven pieces in all," said Dumbledore and Snape gasped in horror, eyes widened. "Unstable and it could have disastrous effects, but if I've found anything about Tom, he is obsessed with power and immortality and scared to death of death."

“So he’s made them, you wouldn’t happen to know what any of them are?” asked Snape.

“I have my theories as I do with everything else, but nothing concrete and even if I did, it would be a matter of locating them and figuring out a way around whatever protects Voldemort managed,” said Dumbledore in a grave voice. “He would keep his Horcruxes well protected, no matter what they are but we’re getting off the subject. The Horcruxes kept him anchored to life but this artifact that he got his hands on, will bring him back to life.”

“So now what?” inquired Snape and Dumbledore paused, looking rather thoughtful as if running through all of the possibilities in his mind of what to do, with perhaps little time to prepare.

“Severus, should Voldemort return, come to him and offer him information, that you gathered, it is essential that you gain his trust,” said Dumbledore in a calm voice, as he rubbed his fingers to his temple, before he got to his feet, grabbing his wand. “Lie low until that moment comes, if it should come.”

Dumbledore paused, as if utilizing some kind of dramatic effect. He calmly tapped his foot against the floor and looked off at Snape.

“As for myself, the artifact in question is in Albania, the last known location of what remained of Voldemort, so I shall try and do what I can to stall his attack,” said Dumbledore. “If I’m just dealing with Bellatrix, it might be a challenge but I somehow doubt I’m just dealing with her. In fact, I don’t doubt that I’m dealing with a number of followers, as there were many who supported Voldemort.”

Snape nodded, the Albania Ministry had reached a level of corruption that their Ministry had never reached and was a center of a great deal of dark magical activities. It was a safe haven for dark creatures, restricted trade, and who knows what else.

“Should I fail, Severus, I hope the world will be able to carry on without me, I’ve had arranged for certain vital information to be delivered to Miss Potter at that time, I just hope she has forgiven me

enough to take it to heart,” said Dumbledore as he turned. If Voldemort had managed to utilize the orb, he did not intend on coming. If not, he planned to find a way to deactivate it and hopefully stall it as long as possible, but until Voldemort returned to a body, he could not be killed.

-

“Any luck?” asked Nymphadora.

“Nothing,” said Andromeda in a dismal voice. “I could not get a hold of Amelia and Fudge seems to refuse to believe anything could be the matter. Even if I didn’t tell him that a vampire was the one who told me of this. Hell, I’m having trouble believing it myself, but...”

“It’s true,” said Elizabeth. “I don’t know how but it’s just something I feel, it’s almost like something left over from the Horcrux that the goblins removed from my head...I don’t know, I can’t really explain it...”

“Odd, but if Voldemort returns, we can’t fight him but it’s not like we can hide,” muttered Harry under his breath.

“You will fight him, regardless of what you try, he will come for you,” rasped Eskara with a pained expression on her face, as the blood was fading as she tried to pull herself up. “I must leave now, I’m sorry, both of you, but I can’t resist, I will have to prey on something and you don’t want me to be here when the urges come. Good luck no matter what, I wish it did not have to come this, perhaps if it was not for that prophecy...you wouldn’t have to deal with this.”

“What prophecy?” asked Elizabeth with a frown on her face, this was the first she ever heard of this prophecy but Eskara had a look of weakness, before she turned away, it was obvious she was unwilling or unable to answer. Harry looked at his twin, who made a step forward to help their grandmother but Harry gripped her wrist, shaking his head, trying to brush off the pleading look. “Harry, we have to do something to help her, she’s in pain...”

“That’s exactly the reason why we can’t help her, she might be human now, but she could turn to the most vicious, blood thirsty stereotype of a vampire in a minute, so just stand back, Lizzie, if she wishes to leave, let her,” said Harry and Elizabeth looked at him, but Andromeda nodded her head.

“Your brother is right,” said Andromeda but suddenly, every window of the house shattered with a loud blast, causing glass to fly everywhere. Nymphadora just managed to block the backlash with a shield charm, but they were knocked off guard, as several hooded figures walked inside.

“Hi, Andi, long time no see, sis!” cackled Bellatrix in an insane voice and Andromeda attempted to fight, but Bellatrix had gotten all of the dueling talent in the family and she disarmed her with ease, as the Albanian wizards ran inside. Nymphadora tried in vain to fight them but found this was impossible, as she was sent crashing through a table.

“The wards were supposed to protect us!” shouted Andromeda in a horrified voice. “How did you...”

“Magical wards are not a barrier for Lord Voldemort,” hissed a very familiar voice and both of the twins looked at each other, this voice sent chills down their spine.

It was him or at least his spirit, right now, he possessed another host, one of his many able followers, who would give him their body willingly for great sacrifice and the wizards closed in on the twins, with Nymphadora got to her feet, but Bellatrix whipped her wand, causing the young Auror trainee to be slammed against the wall and gasping for breath.

“One false move, Nymmy, and I’ll crush you like a bug!” cackled Bellatrix insanely as she looked at her niece who struggled and squirmed as much as she was allowed. Bellatrix licked her lips as she watched this scene for about a moment.



“What do you want, Bella?” asked Andromeda as she struggled for breath but as Eskara’s hand twitched, as she slowly got to her feet, awakened by the taste of blood.

“The Holyhead Harpies in a vat of butter,” said Bellatrix dryly but she averted her eyes to the wizard who was privileged with hosting the Dark Lord. “But this isn’t about what I want today, it’s about what he wants.”

“That’s correct, Bellatrix, the Potter twins were present at my unfortunate setback, even though I give Elizabeth full credit for being the one that should be credited for my fluke and it is only appropriate that they see my grand resurrection and be the first victims of my reestablished reign of power,” said Voldemort in a soft deadly voice, that demanded one’s complete and full attention. Both of the twins struggled in vain as Voldemort looked at them. Harry could not reach his wand without snapping at least a limp due to the tight grip and Elizabeth’s neck was placed in a magically created noose. He knew if there was one false move, his sister’s neck could be snapped.

“You won’t have them, you foul abomination!” shouted Eskara as she threw herself right towards the wizard inhabited by the spirit of Voldemort. Her fangs bit into the man’s neck, she sucked the blood but it tasted foul and almost toxic, yet somehow addictive. It was tainted by Voldemort as she recoiled in horror, as the body deflated to the ground, but not before the spirit of Voldemort jumped to another wizard.

“Foolish vampire, you thought you could defeat me by merely destroying my vessel,” hissed Voldemort in a deadly voice and Voldemort whipped his wand, causing a wooden stake to impale itself right into Eskara’s heart. The vampire dropped to the ground as Elizabeth gasped slightly, but could not move due to the noose around her neck. Eskara struggled but it was useless, as the stake was wedged deep her heart and it was unfortunate that it was not the quick death that Muggle vampire fiction lead people to believe. A jerk of the wand, and Andromeda was thrown to the ground.

“Should I, my Lord?” asked Bellatrix, as she looked at her niece and sister, both powerless to stop them and she licked her lips in anticipation.

“No, Bellatrix, there will be more than ample time to kill them once I return to power,” said Voldemort, who was tired of using ill equipped vessels. He needed a body to call his own and one that could harness ultimate power, right about now as two of the Albania wizards strapped bracelets to the hands of both of the twins. “Magical suppressors, even without your wands, I shall not take a chance that your magic will fire back at me again.”

“You mean you’re going to kill us just like that!” shouted Elizabeth in a horrified voice.

“Yes,” said Voldemort coldly. “Did you expect me to make some droning speech, untie you, and given you a chance to defend yourselves? You will witness my return to power and then I’ll kill you, before taking control of this pitiful world.”

Elizabeth and Harry struggled, Harry attempted to find a way, anyway to fight back but it was for nothing, as Voldemort wasted little time, having his followers make them touch a Portkey and bringing them to his makeshift base of operations deep in the middle of a barren patch of the Albania Forest.

-

Amelia Bones just arrived at her office and the moment she did, she saw that an incoming Floo message was coming through. It was urgent and she quickly pulled out her wand, before she tapped the Floo twice and revealed the face of Andromeda Black who looked rather frantic.

“Amelia, this is Andromeda, I’ve just received a disturbing piece of information, and I thought you should know but this is something that I can’t tell you over the Floo because someone might intercept the information and try to stop you from doing what’s necessary,” said

Andromeda. "So get in touch with me, hopefully soon enough, before this happens."

Amelia thought, Andromeda seemed worried and she was never worried without a good reason. Andromeda took a handful of Floo Powder and threw it into the fire, to tell Andromeda that she was heading straight over.

"Andromeda Black!" shouted Amelia but there was no answer. She sensed there was something wrong and she backed off a couple of steps. "Nothing."

There was no time to inform the Minister, if this was as urgent as Andromeda had declared, he would be up to his ears in this now anyway as Amelia sent a message forth, contacting Rufus to send some Aurors to Andromeda's place of residence but be discrete about it. Time was of the essence.

-

Andromeda's fingers twitched as she had woken up from getting knocked around by Bellatrix. It was a miracle she was not dead. She watched her daughter off to the side, barely able to stand and suddenly, several more pops echoed, the Aurors arriving, with Amelia behind then, her wand out as well.

"You're too late," rasped Andromeda as she tried to sit up, as the Aurors moved around, looking around the house for any surprises. One of them conjured a glass and filled it with water, handing it to Andromeda who drank it but was still severely weak. "He arrived, and took them both..."

"Slow down Andromeda, there will be plenty of time," said Amelia but Andromeda looked frantic.

"No we don't have any time, it was him, You-Know-Who, Lord Voldemort, he's in some kind of spectral form, I can't really explain it but he's still there, Bellatrix lead him here, he attacked us and kidnapped the twins, he says he's going to kill them once he returns

to power,” said Andromeda. “He has some artifact, that would return him...grant him ultimate power...”

“We need to figure out where You-Know-Who had went, check for any Portkey residue or anything that could lead us to where he took the two children,” said Rufus Scrimgeour, adopting a business like tone, before he turned to the a pair of the Aurors in what looked like an afterthought. “And escort Miss Black and Miss Tonks to St. Mungos to get the treatment, if it was Lestrangle that attacked them, they would need it.”

Scrimgeour slumped against the wall, as he looked rather stressed and tired. The Lestrangle investigation and the murders of the prominent purebloods stressed him to the point of near instability and now this entire mess, whatever it was. He did not want to believe that there was a chance that Voldemort would return but given the damage, around them.

“Found something, Rufus,” said one of the senior Aurors gruffly. “Portkey signature, Portkey appears to lead to a small village on the outskirts of Albania.”

“Narrows it down, considering it’s an entire country,” muttered an Auror under his breath but Scrimgeour just turned to the senior Auror.

“Let’s see if you can narrow it down to a more specific location,” said Scrimgeour, as he put a hand to his forehead. “Do hurry, the lives of innocents are at stake, if this is grave as Miss Black is leading on.”

“Found it!” exclaimed the Senior Aurors as he triangulated the path and created a Portkey. “This is about as close as we can get...”

“Be on your guard, He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named is likely to put precautions up and he will bounce us back from where we know,” said Scrimgeour as he turned to Amelia. “Inform the Minister within the next hour.”

Amelia nodded, Fudge would find out anyway but if he found out too soon, he would intervene and then everything would be ruined. She returned to the Ministry, to prepare, hoping that Rufus and his team would be able to deal with Voldemort and perhaps by some miracle stop him. Without knowing exactly how much time passed since Voldemort and his followers had captured Harry and Elizabeth Potter, there was no telling how they would be successful.

-

Harry's eyes opened slightly, he had been rendered unconscious sometime during transit but he was not dead. The place he was in was barren and completely lifeless. He saw Elizabeth move and a black shadow hovering in the air, right across from them, as several hooded figures were, as a worried looking middle aged man, with grey hair, looked over a glowing glass orb, making several notes.

"The orb," muttered Elizabeth and Harry managed to nod. They both knew, through silent communication that they had to find a way through remove those magical suppressors and get the orb away from Voldemort. It was not too late for them to get out. The black shadow above them shifted and looked down at the grey haired man, who was furiously making notes.

"Carvus, what is taking so long, don't tell me you're trying to stall for time, hoping that someone is going to stop me?" asked Voldemort, as two Albanian wizards, along with Bellatrix, held their wands to the heads of the man called Carvus, who shook his head furiously as he clutched his hands.

"No, of course not, it's just a delicate process, please, just give me more time, five more minutes, and I'll translate the process properly, giving you the power you desire," said Carvus as he twitched as Bellatrix's wand shot sparks just a half of an inch away from his ear. Voldemort hovered for a few seconds, before his eyes averted downwards towards Carvus, as he attempted to determine something.

“You have two or your family will pay,” said Voldemort in a cold voice, but his focus was completely on Carvus, as Elizabeth shifted her weight, those magical suppressors were snapped on tight and she had no way to move. She gave them a little wiggle, a bit of a shift but nothing, as she rocked back, in an attempt to remove the bracelets, but they remained firmly snapped around her wrists.

“Hopeless,” muttered Harry as he rolled his eyes, but suddenly, he saw what looked like a key dangling from one of the pockets of the Death Eaters. It was the only way to break it, it had to be. He turned to Elizabeth, shifting over slightly and Harry nudged his sister with his shoulder, trying not to attract the attention of Voldemort or any of his followers. Elizabeth nodded in understanding as she tried to get to her feet, reaching for the key. The follower was distracted by keeping an eye for any intruders and the others were tied up with other matters. Elizabeth picked up a stick and reached for the key, managing to pull it out slowly as she could manage.

“Got it,” whispered Elizabeth when she slid out of sight and slide the key to Harry. Harry managed to unhook the magical suppressors from him, before he reached over, and carefully, somehow by some miracle, not making any noise.

“Faster you worm, the Dark Lord waits for no wizard,” commanded Bellatrix angrily as Carvus held up his hand.

“Nearly done, just one more line of the scrolls,” said Carvus, as he cast a brief look, seeing that the Potter twins were in the process of freeing themselves. He hated putting his hopes in children but they were about the only chance he had. “Just about another minute...one miscue in a calculation and you’ll be trapped inside the orb for all eternity...”

“Very well, but do step it up,” hissed Voldemort angrily, he was losing his patience with the man but he did not want one error to be made due to carelessness. He was too terrified of what might happen to his family to deliberate sabotage the orb but at the same time, there was certain chances the Dark Lord would not take. “I wish to pick up where I left off and beyond...”

Suddenly, Harry and Elizabeth dove forward as quickly as they could, taking two of the Albanian wizards by surprise and knocking them down, before grabbing their wands. It took the others a few seconds to realize what happened.

“ACCIO ORB!” shouted Harry as firmly as he could manage and the orb shot off of the tree stump and right into his hands. Elizabeth blocked a stunning spell and knocked down one of the Death Eaters but Harry was tossing the orb up and down, playing catch with it nonchalantly. The Death Eaters, horrified what might happen if Harry had broke the orb, was distracted which allowed Elizabeth to get to her feet, wielding the wand she had stolen, as she looked forward, standing right beside her twin.

Bellatrix suddenly slashed her wand forward, sending jagged purple light but Harry just barely levitated a rock to block it, expending an above average amount of magic. This allowed the Death Eaters to move from the other sides, their wands throwing every curse. The twins, too far out of their league, managed to hold their own for a little bit of time but were outmatched.

“Grab them both and secure them,” hissed the angered Voldemort and Elizabeth was disarmed quickly, Harry just mere seconds later, as ropes shot from their wands. “You two children will regret playing the hero on this day, once you witness my resurrection.”

The twins struggled against their bonds, as Bellatrix held her wand, pointing them at the throat of both of the twins.

“Not yet Bellatrix, momentarily, I want them to be alive just long enough to see how futile their efforts were to defeat me,” said Voldemort coldly, as he cast his glare down towards the Potter twins, as one of the Albania wizards placed the Orb down. “I trust all is in order, Carvus, I don’t need further delays.”

“Yes, my Lord,” said the wizard in a deflated voice, as he held his translations of the ancient scrolls and prepared to unlock its mystical secrets.

It was looking if time had run out for the Potter twins and the entire world.

-

Scrimgeour arrived, as he quickly turned to the Aurors that he had brought along. This was as far as they could travel by magic.

“He’s close,” said Scrimgeour gruffly, as he turned to his Aurors and they walked towards the forest.

“It’s an amazing coincidence that I’ve come to that conclusion as well,” said the calm voice of Albus Dumbledore.

“Dumbledore, what are you doing here?” demanded Scrimgeour.

“I believe that is a question that I could be asking you Rufus, but considering that time is in fact of the essence, we can ask plenty of questions once this situation is contained,” said Dumbledore as he moved forward into the forest, at the sounds of struggle. He turned his ear on the forest. “I believe if we take this path, we’ll reach whatever trouble lurks within a short amount of time.”

The Aurors moved, as Scrimgeour looked as if he wanted to protest that Dumbledore had invited himself along with an Auror mission but there was little that could be done to argue given how grace the situation was.

-

“Prepare to see the return of Lord Voldemort!” cried Bellatrix in a giddy voice but suddenly there were footsteps approaching them, as Carvus prepared the orb, but several Ministry of Magic Aurors. The black mist turned, before it gave the order.

“Take care of those meddling fools!” hissed Voldemort and his faithful followers rushed forward, throwing themselves into the heat of



combat, battling with the Aurors that had showed up but there was another face.

“Dumbledore!” shouted Bellatrix if Christmas had come early and brought all of the holidays along for the ride. “I was hoping to run a spike into you!”

Bellatrix blasted a jet of black light with the intended spike included but Dumbledore blocked it. Dumbledore threw a couple of spells but he was out of practice due to not fighting a proper duel in years and age was making a fool of him. Bellatrix threw several dangerous looking curses that he blocked, as the Aurors dueling with the other Death Eaters, as the Potter twins were still tied to a tree.

“Hang on Lizzie,” muttered Harry, as he tried to reach for a wand that had been disarmed with his foot but could not quite get it.

“Carvus, the time is now,” said Voldemort and Carvus placed his wand on the orb, pointing up towards Voldemort as Dumbledore struggled to get past Bellatrix, but the woman refused to let Dumbledore by without one of the toughest fights.

“Bellatrix, please listen to reason, we can’t let Voldemort channel the power within that orb,” said Dumbledore as he tried to push by. “He won’t need you or any other followers if he has that ultimate power...”

“LIES!” shrieked Bellatrix. “I will silence that filthy blood traitor tongue of yours Dumbledore, by removing it.”

A jet of yellow light, blocked. Dumbledore attempted to secure Bellatrix but the woman kept up with him, as the fight between the Ministry Aurors and Voldemort’s Albania Death Eaters continued as the orb began to split up, shooting a large blast of magical energy right towards the mist that was once Lord Voldemort.

“Lord Voldemort, we must stop right now, the process won’t be able to be controlled!” shouted Carvus.

“No, Carvus, I want all of the power!” hissed Voldemort in an intoxicated voice.

“But it will destroy everything...” stated Carvus.

“Just do as I say,” said Voldemort softly and Carvus continued the process, as the orb continued to rattle beneath them.

“Got it,” muttered Harry, as he held the wand, slicing the ropes, before he helped free his sister, as Dumbledore finally managed to knock Bellatrix unconscious and step forward.

“Tom please consider the consequences of what you’re doing,” said Dumbledore in a desperate but futile plea, as a high cold laughter appeared, as the orb was drained of even more power.

“The only consequences will be your demise and anyone who opposes me,” said Voldemort.

“ACCIO ORB!” shouted Elizabeth frantically, as the orb was ripped from the grasp of Carvus. It sealed shut the second Elizabeth caught it.

The black mist swirled into a cyclone in the air before it turned into something more corporeal.

There was no mistake about it, Lord Voldemort returned, more dangerous and many times more powerful than ever before.

## Chapter Twenty Nine: The Unwinnable Fight:

The resurrected form of Lord Voldemort floated high above the Albania Forest, looking down at the petrified bystanders below. Many battle hardened Aurors looked absolutely terrified. As far as the Wizarding World was concerned, Lord Voldemort was the ultimate evil, the one that most refused to even speak his name out fear and for good reason, there was fear, as Lord Voldemort was back, more powerful than ever. He could feel the power flowing through his recently reconstructed magical essence, it was more obvious than ever and Voldemort turned his attention down onto the crowd, or to be particular, two children. Sparks flew from his finger tips as he lowered himself slightly. He had no use for a wand, he had reached the ultimate stage of magical evolution, one that was thought impossible without turning one's magic into what was basically an extremely potent nuclear weapon.

"I have returned and you weak pathetic fools will bow before the return of Lord Voldemort," hissed Voldemort darkly, as his eyes averted down.

Rufus Scrimgeour quickly motioned for his Aurors to move around, wands drawn.

"Throw everything you have at him, we have one shot, make it count!" shouted Rufus in an agitated voice and several spells, some of them potentially lethal, shot right towards Voldemort. Voldemort just stood there, not making one movement to block them, before a dark glow enveloped around his body. The magic was absorbed around Voldemort before it whipped right back towards his attackers. The power of their attacks were amplified tenfold and at least ninety percent of the Aurors were killed instantly, with all of the others dying from their injuries, as Voldemort turned his attention downwards, but Dumbledore got to his feet. The old man was thinking quickly and one thing was for certain, while he had only managed to siphon the power of half of the Magician's Orb, he was still far more powerful than he had ever been at the peak of his reign of terror.

He turned to the Potter twins and quickly realized there was only one course of action as Voldemort glided forward, magically generated winds ripping the branches from the trees and the ground shaking slightly below them.

“FAWKES!” bellowed Dumbledore and with a flash of fire, his Phoenix appeared and with a flick of his wand, Carvus was levitated off of the ground. “Elizabeth, Harry, grab on right now, for the moment you have to trust me but Voldemort will kill us all if we spare another second.”

Harry and Elizabeth paused for a second but had to do as they were told for the moment, having no choice, after all, Dumbledore was unlikely to play any games at such a crucial juncture. Elizabeth held the orb, it felt warm against her and powerful, as they grabbed onto the tail feathers of Fawkes. With a flash of fire, Dumbledore, Elizabeth, and Harry, along with Carvus, had disappeared into mid air, with Voldemort blasting green bolts of magical energy at the ground.

“They’ve got away my Lord,” said Bellatrix in a horrified voice.

“It matters little Bella, I will hunt them down soon enough and exterminate both of them,” said Voldemort, as his body was enveloped with more power, it was almost he was drawing the magical energy lingering in the air into his essence. “The world will tremble once again before me, no one can dare touch me ever again.”

“My Lord, they took the Orb and that fool Carvus as well,” stated one of the Albanian Wizards which caused Voldemort to consider the potential ramifications, but his face just contorted into a twisted smirk.

“Ah yes but Carvus’s notes on the Orb remain as do the scrolls but I’m afraid not for long,” said Voldemort and two blasts of fire incinerated them immediately, leaving no trace that they had ever existed. “Whatever remaining power lingers in the Orb will be of no use to them now.”

Lord Voldemort gave a cold high round of laughter, at his brilliance and Bellatrix looked excited at serving her master.

“Just give us the word, my Lord, and I’ll do anything you want me to,” said Bellatrix. “I’ve already weeded out your weaker followers, but once we crack open Azkaban, we’ll have your most faithful followers at your beck and call and make all the Mudbloods and blood traitors fear us once again.”

“Admirable sentiments, Bella, but there’s just a bit of a problem with what you’re proposing,” said Voldemort softly and Bellatrix wondered what this problem could be. “With the ultimate power I have, I no longer require any followers. Good bye.”

With a loud blast of green light, every living thing remaining in the forest dropped dead and Voldemort rose above it, surveying the situation, a smile on his thin lips.

“The foolishly naïve are always the first to die,” stated Voldemort as he turned before he made his way to lay waste to Albania. It was time to give the Wizarding World a taste of what Lord Voldemort was capable of accomplishing.

-

“What do you mean Scrimgeour took a group of Aurors to Albania without my authorization?” demanded Fudge as he looked at Amelia Bones.

“The Potter twins were kidnapped by Bellatrix Lestrange,” said Amelia, choosing what to reveal to the Minister at the moment very carefully.

“I was under the impression that their home was heavily protected,” said Fudge who imagined the political scandal that would occur if the Boy-Who-Lived and his twin sister were murdered. “And Scrimgeour took a quarter of our Aurors to Albania...that’s where Dumbledore thinks He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named is?”

“I’m afraid so, Minister,” said Amelia.

“But he’s dead, still Lestrage is unhinged enough to believe that and might kill one or either of those children in a sacrifice, I’m no expert but I’m sure there’s a number of rituals that can be used,” said Fudge before he sank into the chair and put his head in his hands in frustration. This day was too confusing for his like. Ever since Lestrage had broken out of Azkaban, it seemed like the Wizarding World had descended into what amounted to chaos and anarchy. A good chunk of the Dementors destroyed, and the others just vanishing without a trace, pureblood nobles dropping dead right and left, his own Senior Undersecretary killed in his own home.

“Minister!” shouted a voice of his magical intercom. “An urgent bulletin, word coming in from Albania....”

“Albania, did you say?” asked Fudge, who grew sick at this country being mentioned. “What is it?”

“An epidemic of natural disasters, flood, fire, earthquakes, villages burned to the ground reduced to nothing,” said the voice. “Our contact at the Albanian Ministry of Magic believes it to be magical in nature...”

“I was afraid of that,” stated Fudge in a terrified voice.

“Do you wish for me to connect him so he can tell you about this?” asked the voice.

“Yes, Bernard, that would be acceptable,” said Fudge, who wanted nothing more than to have a large bottle of Firewhiskey and there was a sound of the communication being transformed.

“Hello, Minister,” stated a soft voice over the magical intercom. “You don’t know who this is, do you?”

“Of course not, you told me that you could not reveal your identity for security purposes,” scoffed Fudge and the voice over the intercom

responded with high cold laughter. "What is the meaning of this? You are the contact at the Albanian Ministry of Magic are you not?"

"No, unfortunately he is indisposed and I doubt you would have any further communication, Cornelius," stated the voice from other the intercom. "My name is Tom Marvolo Riddle but I think you would better know me under a different name."

"And what would that be?" demanded the Minister but Amelia was growing pale. She had recognized the voice, having only heard it once before but it was not a voice that one would forget once they had forgotten it.

"I am Lord Voldemort," hissed the voice over the intercom.

"That's absurd, the official Ministry of Magic investigation revealed You-Know-Who was dead, killed at that night that he tried to kill the Potter twins," said Fudge, whose face was going completely red. "You-Know-Who can't be alive, he's dead..."

"Dead is not a term to be thrown around loosely but the fact remains Minister, several of your little puppets have been murdered, Scrimgeour and his Aurors tried to attack me, it was quite amusing, they were murdered within seconds," stated Voldemort in a calm voice. "I'm sure you've heard a bit about what's happening in Albania, how I'm destroying everything and I'm sure you're wondering why I'm doing this. No reason other than the fact I can."

"You're a crazed wizard whoever you are and the Ministry of Magic will bring you to justice!" cried Fudge.

"Big talk for such a little man," hissed Voldemort coldly. "And I'm no mere wizard. I can perform extraordinary feats of magic beyond anyone's wildest imagination. I've taken the next step to be one someone of my stature should be."

"And what is that?" demanded Fudge.

“A magical god,” said Voldemort in a sadistic voice. “Albania was the first to feel the full extent of my new power, I will wipe out everyone and remake the world in my own image. No one can stop me, not your pathetic Ministry, not Dumbledore, not even the Girl-Who-Lived.”

“What do you want?” asked Fudge.

“Nothing,” stated Voldemort calmly. “Why ask for something that I can just as easily take? The world is populated with fools and weakness, yet there will be some who attempt to oppose true power. Those will be crushed and I will triumph over them all.”

With that the communication went dead as Fudge leaned forward, head in his hands, as he sighed in frustration.

“Some psychopath thinks he’s He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named and is destroying Albania or so he says, hard to believe that someone could destroy an entire country, he might have gotten his hands on some really powerful magical artifact, who knows what’s in that country, even our intelligence isn’t that good,” responded Fudge as he responded with a sigh.

“That was him Minister, whether or not you want to deny it,” said Amelia. “But there is one piece of good news out of this entire situation.”

“How can anything good come from him or someone who thinks he’s He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named causing havoc out of our jurisdiction?” asked Fudge as he point his hand on his forehead, rubbing his temples.

“His words seem to indicate that at least Elizabeth Potter has survived whatever ordeal that Bellatrix Lestrange has put the twins through,” said Amelia and Fudge did not look relieved. He was one of those in the Ministry that subscribed to the popular theory that Harry Potter was in fact the Boy-Who-Lived and Fudge got to his feet with a bold look on his face. Amelia recognized that look immediately, it



meant the Minister was going to do something foolish and there was not one word that she could say to convince him otherwise.

“We must have all of our resources descend upon Albania immediately,” responded Fudge in a calm voice. “Aurors, hit wizards, everything, I need to contact the International Confederation of Wizards and try and enlist the help of others, stamp this threat out...”

“Minister, he’s laying waste to an entire country, I doubt a mere army will be able to stop him,” said Amelia.

“Of course it will stop him, it has to, once he’s done destroying Albania, he will move onto other countries, including our own home and if we don’t strike right now, he will topple the Ministry like nothing,” said Fudge as he got to his feet, before he issued an all points warning to the entire Ministry of Magic.

-

“Where are we?” demanded Elizabeth, as they looked around in a sizeable but barren room with nothing but a bench.

“Relax, Miss Potter, you’re perfectly safe,” stated Dumbledore but the sharp look that both the twins gave him indicated that this was the wrong thing to say.

“The last time you said that, Lizzie was condemned to the Dursleys, you best have some answers now, Dumbledore,” said Harry as he waved his wand threateningly.

“I hoped that assisting with your easy escape would ease some of the harsh feelings for an old man’s error in judgment but I’m afraid there is still much to be done but there is little time,” said Dumbledore, as he placed the unconscious form of Carvus down upon a bed. “Rest assured, you are in a place with every magical protection that I can think of. It was used as a sanctuary during the war with Grindelwald but I do hope it’s withstood the test of time.”

Harry just responded with a cold nod, arms folded.

“ I don’t know what protections you have, Dumbledore, but Voldemort will tear them down easily, you saw how easily he dispatched of an army of Aurors,” responded Elizabeth with a look of warning.

“Ah, but he has to find you first Miss Potter, before he can tear anything down but I do agree his newly acquired powers are great, despite only siphoning half of the magical energy contained within the orb,” said Dumbledore. “Stay here and I shall return within five minutes. I have to contact some people that I have on call for such an emergency to collect your friends and their families. I fear that Voldemort might use them as bait to lure you into a trap.”

Dumbledore was transported in a flash of fire, leaving the Potter twins alone in the room to exchanged a look.

“I don’t trust him one bit, Lizzie,” said Harry. “After all he’s put both of us though...”

“I know Harry, believe me, I’m far from trusting Voldemort, but the situation is rather grim,” stated Elizabeth. “Voldemort’s back and...I couldn’t imagine a situation that’s worse off. The way he vaporized the Aurors...and how is anyone supposed to fight that?”

“Someone’s going to have to,” stated Harry, deciding to lightly dance around the very obvious fact that it would be Elizabeth that would have to deal with the problem that was Lord Voldemort. He had wished this was not the case, but Voldemort was likely to not allow anyone who would be considered a threat to live. “Not that it’s going to be that pleasant of a task and until then...”

“ Everyone’s going to be killed and Voldemort will rule over everything,” said Elizabeth in a horrified voice. “We barely escaped, I can just imagine what would have happened if he had siphoned all of the power from the orb. Only half like Dumbledore said and he’s like this...”

“Not exactly all that pleasant, Lizzie, but there’s going come a time where we have to face this...” stated Harry. “Sorry, but there’s no dancing around the subject, Voldemort will want to kill you from defeating him the first time and...I’m not letting you tackle this alone.”

“Harry, you don’t have to do this, I can handle this myself,” stated Elizabeth but she looked uncertain and Harry just gave her a stern look. “Okay, no one can handle this but still, there’s no need to put yourself in...”

“I have a feeling if our roles would be reversed, we’d still be having the same conversation and I’d try to convince you to stay out of this, but no matter what, we have to deal with this together,” said Harry. “I’m not sure how much I enjoy what’s to come either but unfortunately, if I’m right, we have no choice in what’s at hand.”

Elizabeth responded with a nod but her eyes snapped up when she looked at the orb in her hands.

“Voldemort has half of the orb’s power that means half is still here!” yelled Elizabeth as a look of triumph appeared on her face. “I can...”

“No!” shouted Harry firmly. “Absolutely not, even if it was the only way to defeat Voldemort, no, there’s just something about this entire Magician’s Orb thing that unnerves me. The power, it’s unnatural and besides, exactly how are we going to get it open? The only person who could tell us anything is currently unconscious.”

“Just a thought,” said Elizabeth in a deflated voice as she moved back into her usual state of hopelessness but her eyes flicked to a bookshelf off on the side of the shelter and quickly she bounced up to her feet. She moved over and pulled out a book from the shelf and flipped it open, leafing through it eagerly. “Magical texts...some of them look very advanced and borderline dark...maybe there’s something in here that can help us defeat Voldemort. Grab one Harry and help me research them.”

“Too little too late maybe,” muttered Harry but never the same, he grabbed another one of the texts. When the others had gotten here,

maybe they could help. Still, even if they did find some amazing, out of this world spell that would spell Voldemort's end, Harry doubted very much that Elizabeth, even with her ability, could master an advanced spell soon enough.

-

Dumbledore appeared with a light pop just outside of the Albania borders. The old crowd was in the process of rounding up those closest to the Potter twins, but Dumbledore had more pressing issues on his mind. He was not perfect contrary to popular belief and he made two big mistakes. The placement of Elizabeth Potter at the Dursleys and not nipping the Voldemort situation in the bud when he had the opportunity. Now that Voldemort had more power than ever before, Dumbledore had to face his biggest mistake, even though it was evident that it might be a mistake in itself. While just as powerful as ever, Dumbledore was a few steps slower than his prime and not as sharp in thinking on his feet. He had hid behind careful plans for a bit too long.

He looked over, to see that he was in fact not alone and he saw a small army of Aurors, Hit Wizards, and assorted others walking towards the border, with Cornelius Fudge in the background, bold as ever, and he looked at Dumbledore.

"Dumbledore, what are you doing here?" demanded Fudge.

"I could ask the same of you, Cornelius," said Dumbledore.

"Some imposter claims he's He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named and has used a magical artifact to lay waste to Albania, we're intending to shut him down before it gets too out of hand," said Fudge.

"No imposter Cornelius, it is Voldemort," said Dumbledore as he took a step back, before quickly adding. "I'm afraid I have no time to explain, as time is of the essence."

With a wave of his wand, Dumbledore slipped inside and a large dome of magical energy was encased around Albania. Several

wizards tried to tear it down but considering Dumbledore had put it up, it was difficult for them to even bend it.

“DUMBLEDORE TAKE DOWN THAT BARRIER THIS INSTANCE OR I SWEAR I’LL HAVE YOU ARRESTED!” shouted Fudge but his yelling fell on deaf ears as Dumbledore continued to step forward. An entire country and there was little clue on where he could find Voldemort.

One thing was for certain, Voldemort was definitely there. Most of the grass had been burned from the ground, the sky was red, there was no trees, and the buildings around him looked like a tornado and a hurricane hit them simultaneously. Not to mention there was the foul stench of dark magic in the air. Dumbledore looked up, as he saw a cyclone of magical energy appearing. The face of Voldemort appeared right in mid air.

“Albus, nice of you to show, I’ve expected you,” said Voldemort calmly. “It just shows you how pathetically predictable you are, old man.”

“Hello Tom, I wonder if you can do your old teacher a favor and face me,” said Dumbledore. “Unless you sacrificed a physical form to become the personification of ultimate power and had forsaken your humanity in a misguided attempt to satisfy your lust for power.”

“On the contrary, Albus, I have so much power that I can take on any form I wish!” taunted Voldemort, as his voice echoed all around the area and a loud pop, before the mist around Voldemort dissolved and Dumbledore was face to face with Voldemort. He looked less human than ever before, with chalk white skin and sinister red eyes with red rings around them. His skin was pale, with claws and the putrid smell of dark magic circled around him. “I hope this is to your liking, Albus.”

Voldemort flickered a forked tongue towards Dumbledore as Dumbledore stood his ground. A flash and a sickly blue light shot right towards Dumbledore. Avoided just narrowly, but Dumbledore

watched as the crowd he stood had been completely wiped out. There was nothing but a smoking crater in the ground.

Dumbledore clenched his hand over his wand and began to fire. Spell after spell, a multitude of lights assaulted Voldemort. He was digging deeper than he should have tried and he threw pretty much any spell at Voldemort, in an attempt to weaken him just enough to contain him. Dumbledore stepped back, breathing heavily but Voldemort just stood there, unflinching, as he stared Dumbledore down.

“Are you quite done yet?” asked Voldemort, before he flicked his wrist. A loud crash and Dumbledore was launched several feet into the air before he crashed down. It was like several Hippogriffs had trampled him and Voldemort walked forward, the ground turned black underneath his feet, the very air space that he occupied was polluted with the disgusting stench of dark magic. Voldemort gave another motion and a loud sonic blast echoed and wiped Dumbledore completely out. Any other wizard and he would have been dead, but Dumbledore managed to instinctively block most of the assault. “They say I feared you? They said you are the greatest wizard that ever lived? The vaunted leader of the light, the mighty Albus Dumbledore? Pathetic, weak, old, useless, I’ve become the thing that you could have but did not have the guts too.”

“It takes more courage not to take the easy route for power, Tom,” started Dumbledore but Voldemort sent another blast of magic. Dumbledore was launched off the ground. Several bones cracked and both of his shoulders had been ripped from their sockets. Blood splashed to the ground, his arms were hanging on by a string yet somehow, Dumbledore still lived, albeit in pain and tried to by some miracle pull himself to his feet. Voldemort held his hand in the air and several black balls circled around it. It was almost like Voldemort had summoned pure dark magic from some demonic realm unknown to this world.

“Time to put you out of your misery, Dumbledore,” said Voldemort coldly as his wand arm glowed with pure demonic dark magic. “Good bye, old man, I will miss the amusement you offer me by your pathetic efforts.”

Voldemort prepared to send the final fatal magical attack right towards Albus Dumbledore but a flash of fire signaled the arrival of Fawkes as the Phoenix gave his song with all of his might. The song struck fear in the hearts of most dark magic users but Voldemort was unaffected. Rather he just blasted Fawkes right with the same dark magic attack he intended to use to eliminate Voldemort.

Dumbledore watched in horror as his beloved familiar had been blasted into a shower of blood and feathers. There were no ashes for Fawkes to reborn from. Voldemort had corrupted himself so much that the Phoenix song had no affect on him whatsoever. He was so powerful that he killed a phoenix, something that could not be done. Though the grief, Dumbledore felt an emotion for the first time in a long time.

Rage, Dumbledore bounced off and threw several curses at Voldemort. For the first time, Albus Dumbledore was done playing games, done making plans, now was the time for action, decisive action, even if he had to break his own code to take down the monster that he inadvertently enabled in the first place. Curse after curse, with Dumbledore ignoring the immense pain through his body, he had to end this once and for all. Pinning all of hopes on a thirteen, almost fourteen year old girl was not going to cut it, especially when Voldemort had done this. Using all of the magic, he sent the most powerful curse that he could muster that was not Unforgivable.

The dust cleared and Voldemort stood there, a giant gaping hole in his chest, but he calmly waved his hand and what was technically skin had healed and Dumbledore dropped to the ground, completely exhausted and the horrifying realization was that he had failed to defeat this monster.

With no final word, no last cutting remark, Voldemort shot a deadly curse towards Dumbledore with a mere gesture. His head snapped back and seconds later, his head ripped right off his shoulders. Blood splattered everywhere. Two slashing motions and Voldemort tore Dumbledore's body to shreds, before the head levitated right into the palm of his hand. Voldemort looked at the head with disinterest,

before the Dark Lord ripped the skin from the skull and then crushed into dust.

Without another word, Voldemort walked off, disinterested as if the grisly demise of Albus Dumbledore was an every day occurrence in his life.

-

“At least, the barrier is down!” shouted the leader Auror.

“Finally, Dumbledore will be arrested for this treason!” cried Fudge but a wave of dark magic shot towards them and seconds later, the entire group was turned right into stone, as the wave continued to move across the Albanian countryside on its journey to Wizarding Britain.

Revenge was the only thing Voldemort had craved. No foolish girl would make a mockery out of him and live to tell the tale.

-

Harry sat, as he looked at the sunrise, with a book on his lap. So peaceful, so tranquil, so calm, the world outside.

The world that could end at any moment.

The shack had been rather crowded. Harry thanked his lucky stars that Molly Weasley was too hysterical about the return of Voldemort to take control. The research effort was making some progress but mostly dead ends. The books had several power boosting rituals in them but none of them would get Elizabeth up to the level that she needed to have a chance in surviving a duel with Voldemort and a great many of them would need several weeks for her body to assimilate.

Harry doubted they ever had even hours. Most of the others had drifted off to sleep, even Elizabeth had fallen asleep, due to her frantic research effort. She was so tired, worn down, Harry did not



have the heart to wake her up, she looked so peaceful. Yet, Harry pushed on, because it's what he had to do.

"Harry?" yawned Ginny as she approached him. "You're still up?"

Harry just responded with a nod, as he had raised his wand and shot a jet of cold water into his face, a measure to keep him up and alert.

"You know the vow that I made a long time ago, to protect Elizabeth no matter what the cost was," said Harry as he looked through the book but it was another dead end and he was rapidly running out of options. "I'd like to keep my word on that one..."

"Harry, this is out of your hands," said Ginny, trying to reason with her friend but there were some times where Harry was just so stubborn. "I mean what are you going to do, fight Voldemort?"

"Not the worst option," muttered Harry to himself.

"Dumbledore might have beaten him by now," said Ginny hopefully but Harry just responded with a purely skeptical look, as if he was not willing to entertain the notion.

"Dumbledore for all of his faults, and there are many, is a powerful wizard," said Draco as he walked over. "I don't know Harry, You-Know-Who..."

"That could have been me, that should have been me," muttered Harry as Draco and Ginny looked at him strangely. "If Voldemort would have pointed left instead of right, I would have been the Boy-Who-Lived and Elizabeth would have had the happy childhood, with no cares and this would be my problem to deal with."

"But what about you Harry?" asked Ginny gently.

"It's not about me anymore, I've failed her once before," said Harry. "She was condemned to that place for all of those years..."

“Harry, you were eleven, you couldn’t go up against Dumbledore!” argued Ginny.

“I could have tried to harder to get her out of there, sooner,” said Harry.

“I’m going to go over here until you’re down angsting, Harry,” said Draco as he walked over, as there were others stirring but none seemed to get up, as Elizabeth raised her head up, shaking it.

“Why did I have to doze off?” demanded Elizabeth in a groggy voice as she slid the book she was reading.

“Calm down Lizzie, you were only out for three hours,” said Harry in a pacifying voice.

“That was three hours I could have been researching for someday to win this battle,” argued Elizabeth as she stepped forward and got right into Harry’s face. “Or are you trying to isolate me from this battle Harry, because you think I’m too weak? After all, Lizzie listened to a talking diary, Lizzie allowed herself to get abused by her Muggle relatives, of course she can’t handle this!”

“No, nothing like that,” said Harry. “You’re not too weak, it’s the fact that Voldemort’s too strong!”

“Oh, that helps a lot, thank you Harry,” said Elizabeth sarcastically.

“Guys, please, calm down,” said Ginny as she stepped in between the twins, fully aware that it would be bad if they started to hex each other.

“I’m as calm as you’ll ever see me, as you’re right, I can’t defeat Voldemort, because Dumbledore wasted ten years of my life by sticking me at the Dursleys!” screamed Elizabeth as she had kicked an opened book against the wall and it landed with a thud.

“We’ll think of something, Lizzie,” said Harry with a sigh. “Don’t lose hope, it’s not over yet.”

“Yeah, there’s always Dumbledore,” said Ron who had just joined in as several other Weasleys had just awakened as well at the sound of shouting. “Dumbledore can beat You-Know-Who! There’s no way Dumbledore can let us down!”

Elizabeth just responded by gnashing her teeth.

“This just in, the Wizing Wireless has received a special report involving a force of pure nature that is tearing its way through Europe and on its way towards Wizing Britain,” said the voice as the Wireless had kicked on. “I’ll...”

A loud cackle was heard and several blood shrieking screams echoed throughout.

“Hello, children, this is Lord Voldemort,” hissed the voice of Voldemort. “For those who are fool enough to face me, let me remind you of this. Moments ago, I utterly annihilated Dumbledore and I’m cutting a path of destruction as everyone and everything that stands in my way will be eradicated. There is no hope, only annihilated. But I’ll give the citizens of Wizing Britain a quick demise, under one condition. Deliver me Potter. You have one hour and instructions will be given at that time that will need to be carried out immediately. Otherwise, this country and its rich civilization of magic will be no more. Have a nice day.”

“Deliver him Potter,” muttered a voice, Harry was not quite sure who at this point nor did he really care.

“If he wants Potter, than he can have him,” said Harry firmly with a determined look on his face as he walked forward, towards the front door but Elizabeth grabbed his wrist.

“Harry, you and I both know that’s not what he means,” said Elizabeth but she turned around, as Percy Weasley stood, wand in

hand pointed towards Elizabeth's head but quickly Ginny managed to knock her brother off his feet and he crashed to the ground.

"Anyone else want to do something stupid?" asked Ginny but Molly looked at her daughter completely appalled before she started in as only Molly Weasley could.

"GINERVA MOLLY WEASLEY!" shouted Molly. "HOW DARE YOU CURSE YOUR BROTHER LIKE THAT! THAT IS NO WAY TO ACT...."

Molly was suddenly struck silent, mouth moving but no sound coming out. Luna stood there, whistling innocently.

"Well someone had to do it," said Luna before she grew serious. "What are we going to do?"

No one had an answer. The sands of time began to slip away and Voldemort was on his way. The defenses would hold for only a short amount of time. An atmosphere of utter hopelessness filled the room.

What could they do?

CHP30